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Organization:

State: Montana

Agency: Surface Transportation Board

Initiative: Tongue River Railroad

Submission Text

Tongue River coal, if mined, will be hauled by rail west across Montana, crossing at

least seven rail and motor vehicle crossings in East Helena and Helena lacking a

bridge or underpass. The costs of bridges/underpasses will, by Montana Code

Annotated MCA 7-14-2206, be paid mostly (half to 3/4ths) by Montana taxpayers.

Helena's most important intersection (N. Montana Ave.) has been on the city's

transportation priority list since 1993 but hasn't been built. The City/County 2015

Long Range Transportation Plan puts the cost of just this one bridge at over \$21

million dollars. Aside from the Interstate highway, Montana Ave. is the most

important North-South street in this capital city.

There must be hundreds of RR/vehicle intersections between the proposed coal mine

and Eastern Idaho. Montanans have not spent the money to build these grade

separations, and are not likely to do so. Failure to consider these intersections

and the costs of bridges is a cost-shifting action. As a citizen who happens to be a member of the Greater Helena Transportation Coordinating Committee, I urge you to

reject Tongue River coal mine because of this collateral damage.