

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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Ray Traub, Broadus
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November 22, 2004

Att: Kenneth Blodgett
Surface Transportation Board
Case Control Unit
Washington, DC 20423

Re: Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement, Tongue River Railroad STB Finance
Docket #30186 (Sub-# 3)

Dear Mr. Blodgett:

The purpose of this letter is to state our support for the conclusions of the above referenced EIS on the Western Alignment of the proposed Tongue River Railroad. The Western Alignment is, in our opinion, an improvement to the whole project and addresses the environmental and rail use concerns. The remediation improvements should satisfy the impacted property owners of the Tongue River Valley as they only improve upon the existing approved applications.

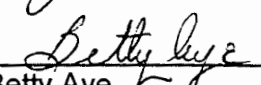
The timely completion of the proposed Tongue River Railroad and the development of the Otter Creek Coal Tracts can create an economic boom in southeastern Montana that will be felt across the state. Coal sales and power generation create many well-paying jobs, provide significant new tax base and should at least stabilize, if not improve upon, our eroding population base. The completion of the Tongue River Railroad opens the doors to this potential development bonanza.

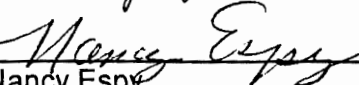
Again, Powder River County Board of Commissioners strongly endorses this amendment to the existing environmental impact statements. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
POWDER RIVER COUNTY


Ray Traub, Chairman


Betty Aye


Nancy Espy