

Ken Blodgett
Surface Transportation Board, Office of Environmental Analysis
395 E Street, S.W., Washington, DC 20423

August 31, 2015

Subj: Tongue River Railroad, Draft EIS, Docket No. 30186

Dear Mr. Blodgett,

I write to urge the Surface Transportation Board to take the "No Action Alternative" on the draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Tongue River Railroad.

I have made my home in Sandpoint Idaho and environs for 22 years. Much of my motivation for making this my home is the clean air and water as well as the beautiful landscape and lake here, all of which provide me with a healthy and peaceful life with my husband, children, grandchildren, pets, livestock and wildlife. I want that life to be preserved for others as well as myself, and I invite you to come and visit our beautiful town, eat our locally grown food, play with our children and swim in our pristine lake! We would only hope in return that we would have an opportunity to discuss this crucial project with you at a public comment hearing.

Our way of life is severely threatened by climate change. Shipping more coal to Asia will only increase the incidence of floods, wildfires and drought, much worse this summer than I have ever experienced. The mercury emissions will poison the fish we eat, the water we use to drink and swim, and the air we breathe. The shipments themselves pose the likelihood of coal dust fouling our air and water, trains blocking our emergency transportation vehicles and interfering multiple times a day with our busy work schedules, and worst of all, trainwrecks. Last year I lost the 25-year-old daughter of old friends who was hit by a train at an unregulated railroad crossing.

Moreover, we will be required to pay for mitigation and safety improvements to accommodate the railroad, suffering monetary and emotional stress from the increased traffic through our town. Our lake, our children and our way of life are painfully at stake.

This is the only chance we have for mitigation of these serious effects. There are other sources of energy which we need to encourage the Chinese, other people around the world, and ourselves to develop, and which do not have such serious consequences.

My fellow North Idahoans are not going to benefit from this project in any way. It's 100% bad news for us.

Of course the issue is much larger than this one project. The Tongue River Railroad is the only opportunity the Surface Transportation Board has to assert jurisdiction over the shipment of Powder River Basin coal through west coast ports. We are depending on you.

Sincerely,



Nancy C. Gerth, Ph.D.
1431 Harlan's Trail
Sagle ID 83860



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View from kitchen window -
where the trains will run.

Sage ID