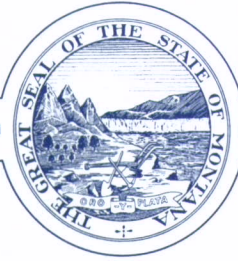


DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
AND CONSERVATION

EI-19983



STEVE BULLOCK, GOVERNOR

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STATE OF MONTANA

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HELENA, MONTANA 59620-1601

January 11, 2013

Ken Blodgett
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington DC 20423-0001

RE: Tongue River Railroad

Dear Mr. Blodgett:

The Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (MDNRC) is aware of the recent application submittals to the Surface Transportation Board in regards to the proposed Tongue River Railroad.

MDNRC owns several parcels of lands that would be impacted by the proposed railroad. These lands are owned by the State of Montana in trust for several beneficiaries, including educational facilities. Additionally, other State of Montana agencies will also be impacted due to the proposed project.

Because the MDNRC is the agency for the State of Montana that bears the most impact, we will be recognized as the lead agency for the State in regards to participation in the EIS process with the Surface Transportation Board. As such, this letter is requesting recognition of the DNRC as a Cooperating Agency with the STB.

The MDNRC is assigning Lisa Axline, Right of Way Section Supervisor, as the project lead. Please coordinate all correspondence and materials to Ms. Axline.

Thank you for allowing us to participate in this process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Shawn Thomas".

Shawn Thomas, Administrator
Trust Land Management Division