

(Tongue River Railroad)
Mr. Ken Blodgett
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20423-0001
Docket No. FD 30186

I am a resident of Bozeman, Montana, and have many reasons to oppose the increase of coal-bearing trains through the city that I call home.

We must recognize the severe economic, public health, and environmental impacts of climate change on our state. Mounting evidence demonstrates the overwhelming negative impacts of both coal mining and its combustion on public health.

It is time to take steps toward reducing American dependence on coal-fired power. It is proposed that tens of millions of tons of coal would be transported from Montana's Powder River Basin via Bozeman's residential neighborhoods to Washington's ports for shipment overseas.

Coal is commonly transported via opentop rail cars without covers, and will contaminate cities, towns, farmland, forestland, streams and rivers with coal dust and chunks of coal. Coal dust is a "pernicious ballast foulant," which destabilizes rail tracks and contributes to train derailments.

Exposure to high concentrations of toxic heavy metals found in coal - including mercury, arsenic, and lead - is linked to cancer and birth defects.

Increased diesel emissions along rail lines through Bozeman, will cause exposure to particulate matter from diesel engines that has been linked to impaired pulmonary development in adolescents; increased cardiopulmonary mortality; measurable pulmonary inflammation; increased severity and frequency of asthma attacks, of emergency room visits and hospital admissions in children; of heart attacks, cancer, asthma and lung disease in children. High concentrations of coal dust have caused marine dead zones in areas where coal is loaded or transported near water.

The new coal export terminals would increase coal train traffic through Bozeman by at least 20 trains per day, causing blocked roads inhibiting the travel of emergency and other vehicles, pedestrians, and access to waterways for fishing and other recreational use.

Montana aspires to be a national model for creating clean-energy jobs, for innovating, developing, demonstrating, and marketing clean energy technologies and practices promoting sustainable global economic development. Coal export, in contrast, promotes destructive and unsustainable energy development practices.

These concerns are reason enough to question the increase in train traffic for the transport of coal through Montana and downtown Bozeman.


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