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Jeffrey S. McDowell, Executive Director

November 27, 2012

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

Re: Environmental filing, Docket No. FD 30186

Mr. Blodgett:

In regard to the above docket relating to the proposed Tongue River Railroad, Two Rivers Authority is a proponent of building this rail line.

Relative to the 15 listed impact categories, a rail line is minimally disruptive compared to other transportation modes. A rail line, with the exception of sidings, uses less functional right-of-way than even a two-lane gravel road.

Railroads and trains cross Montana with minimal environmental effects and tremendous economic benefits, both as primary-industry employers with economic ripple effects and as property-tax payers.

Eastern Montana has been losing population because of the lack of economic opportunity. The Tongue River Railroad offers a chance to affect this situation in a positive way.

Lastly, I would like to address one particular claim of opponents to the railroad: coal dust. More than 10 coal trains, loaded and empty, travel past Hardin daily. You would need scientific instruments to detect any coal dust coming from these trains. It is further my understanding that BNSF, in particular, is addressing this issue by applying sealant at the mine-mouth loading stations.

If I may be of further assistance regarding this matter, please let me know.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jeffrey S. McDowell", is written over a horizontal line.

Jeffrey S. McDowell
Executive Director