

August 3, 2015

Director Victoria Rutson
Office of Environmental Analysis
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20423

I am writing to oppose the construction on the Tongue River Railroad and to urge the STB to take the "no action Alternative." The railroad proposes to haul coal from the speculative Otter Creek mine at a time when coal markets are declining both domestically and around the world.

I agree with those who state that Otter Creek mine is a connected impact of the railroad's construction. Without the railroad, the mine could not exist. And, if approved, the railroad would allow Arch to develop the largest proposed coal mine in the U.S. If its 1.3 billion tons of coal are mined and burned, it would contribute to climate change for the next 55 years. If the mine is developed, Arch would be able to send 1.3 billion tons of coal to Asia. When burned, the coal would pollute the atmosphere with 2.6 billion tons of climate-changing gasses. The mine itself would be massive and destruction irreversible.

Constructing the Tongue River Railroad is essential for Arch Coal to begin strip mining the agriculturally productive, economically vibrant, and culturally significant Otter Creek valley. If approved, Arch will be allowed to condemn private ranch and farm land, pollute Montana's clean air and water, and contribute to climate change. Climate change is one of the most urgent issues facing our world today. (Even Pope Francis has unequivocally proclaimed climate change to be one of the "principal challenges facing humanity.")

The draft EIS assumes that there will be no train traffic impacts from the construction of a rail line that could generate 18-26 additional coal trains per day traveling on existing rail lines. Rail communities between the proposed railroad and the Pacific Northwest export terminals would suffer the consequences of dramatically increased coal train traffic, including reduced property values, increased traffic congestion, safety hazards and air pollution from both diesel exhaust and fugitive coal dust.

The mine and railroad would strain the infrastructure of local communities, increase coal dust pollution, decrease property values, threaten public safety, and lead to rail congestion across Montana and Pacific Northwest.

Please reject the coast-to-Asia railroad. Please protect property rights, clean air, and our global climate.

Thank you for your consideration and help in this urgent matter.

Yours truly,



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