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6-9-15  
2-4 pm

## Tongue River Railroad DEIS

I am Mark Fix and I am a rancher and irrigator on the Tongue River about 20 miles SW of Miles City.

I am here to speak for the no action alternative. The draft environmental impact statement does not go into much detail even though it is a huge document. During scoping, you provided us maps that showed where the routes were supposed to be. We had questions about where there might be sidings. You provided that information to us. The DEIS does not show where the sidings might be. It only talks in general terms as to where they might be.

Our ranch has two routes proposed across it and four alternatives. During scoping the map that was given to me for the Moon Creek alternative went across my place and did not cross a well we have on the place. The latest proposal for the Moon Creek alternative would now cross the well. The DEIS says that any well that is crossed will be plugged. It does not state whether or not the TRR will replace the well. The Moon Creek alternative would split my ranch in half. I would probably need to replace one well with two wells because the pastures would be split in two. The Moon Creek route follows my access road up over the Moon Creek divide. I could not access my pasture because the railroad would take out my access road. The terrain is too steep and I could not access my North Pasture without building a new road. It appears that the cuts on the Moon Creek route could divert drainage water into the Tongue River drainage instead of the Yellowstone drainage. One of my dams may no longer fill with water due to this change.

The Tongue River route would also cross our property. One of the things that I realized after years of dealing with the proposed Tongue River Railroad is that a road would have to be built alongside the route to access the track for fire and to spray for weeds. Disturbing the land will open up a corridor for weeds to spread up and down the disturbed area. The DEIS talks about where road crossing may be required, but did not look at the fact that a road would be required for the Tongue River route. There is no access from Miles City to the SH ranch on the West side of the river. There is also no access after the Harwood Ranch until Brandenburg. There is also no road proposed for the Moon Creek alternative. Access to that area would be difficult and it is several miles from any residences. Fires created by the railroad may not be seen until they are out of control. There is no discussion about how the grade will be built. Will they need to use our private bridges across the Tongue to build the railroad or will they only access the area from the West side of the river. How will they service the area once the rail line is built? Again, will they want to use our private bridges?

I noticed that there is a picture of where the railroad is proposed under the I-94 interstate. The picture does not show that an exit will be created at that point. There should be an exit provided so that emergency vehicles could access the rail line to fight fires and spray weeds. The picture brings up more questions. Would trains be stopped to wait for an opening on the existing BN line? It appears that a train parked near the BN line would block the access to Fort Keogh. The best way to access Fort Keogh to fight a fire would be to go to the Fish Hatchery and go under the Interstate. A train parked there would block that access. An exit would need to be provided to provide operation of Fort Keogh and

access for fire and spraying for weeds along the rail line. If a road is built along the track, will the costs be paid for by the TRR or by the taxpayers.