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City of Livingston*Incorporated 1889***Chairman***James Bennett***Vice Chairman***Dorel Hoglund***Commissioners***Adam Stern**Mel Friedman**Jon Reddington*

December 8, 2014

Mr. Daniel R. Elliott, Chairman

Surface Transportation Board

395 E. Street SW

Washington DC 20423

SUBJECT: Request to include Livingston, Montana, in the review of proposed Tongue River Railroad

Chairman Elliott:

The City of Livingston, Montana, is bisected by the southern main line of the Montana Rail Link/Burlington Northern Santa Fe railroad companies. It has come to our attention that the development of the Tongue River Railroad, which would connect the existing rail line to the proposed Otter Creek coal mine, would have an impact upon the City of Livingston by increasing rail traffic significantly. The City of Livingston requests that the Surface Transportation Board fully analyze the impacts that construction and operation of the Tongue River Railroad would have on the City of Livingston, and that the board consults with the city as the process moves forward.

Increasing the number of trains through Livingston will exacerbate three issues currently facing our community, including reduced access, potential health concerns from diesel exhaust and coal dust, and additional noise:

- **Access.** Because the city is bisected by the rail line, three railroad crossings – two at grade and one underpass – serve as access points from one side of the city to the other. These crossings are currently stressed with re-routing and congestion issues. Increased rail traffic will increase access issues and bottlenecks for emergency response vehicles, citizens, and businesses.
- **Potential Health Hazards.** Potential health hazards, including exhaust from increased idle time from waiting motor vehicles, increased diesel exhaust from trains themselves, and coal dust from moving trains are a concern for Livingston.
- **Noise.** Many citizens are currently impacted by train and whistle noise due to the central location of the rail line. Residents of Livingston have expressed considerable distress over potential increases in train noise from increased rail traffic.

Finally, the City of Livingston lacks adequate funding for infrastructure upgrades to mitigate impacts caused by rail traffic (underpasses, quiet zones, etc.). We believe it is the responsibility of the Surface Transportation Board – as the regulatory agency for the rail system – to ensure that communities and their taxpayers are not forced to bear these costs, including costs to public health and welfare. Costs associated with mitigating impacts of increased train traffic should be divided fairly between the railroad and taxpayers.

Please consider this request to address the impact of the Tongue River Railroad, and associated increased rail traffic, on the City of Livingston.

Respectfully,

James Bennett

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Chairman, City Commission

OFFICE OF CHAIRMAN

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