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Initiative: Tongue River Railroad

Submission Text

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10 Sidewinder Loop, Montana City, Montana 59634 My name is Duane Catlett. I am here to oppose the Tongue River Railroad. Strongly I oppose it. I live in Montana City, but Helena is really my home. I spend 90% of my time, it seems, in Helena. I'm going to just refer to a couple of historical things. The first is, I was only slightly older than Kate when my son and I, who was two years old at the time, observed his birthday while we were watching Neil Armstrong land on the moon. The significance of that is that he sent back pictures of earth looking over the moon landscape, and for those of us that observed that at the time, it was a real wake up call. Climate change is real folks. There is no other earth. If we believe in a future life for our children and grandchildren and those that come after that, then we have to care about the Tongue River Railroad. That's historically speaking.

Someone earlier mentioned that Montana is looking forward to a spell of dryness. California's been under extreme drought for several years now, and Montana, in a recent article that I looked at, is listed as very high for future long-term drought. That means that we have to care about water. We already know that the glaciers are going to be gone by 2025 or something like that. I spend a lot of time in glacier. I've been walking around on a lot of those things. So, it's meaningful to me. I grew up in the sand hills of Nebraska, if anyone is familiar with the Niobrara River, which flows through the sand hills, is very comparable to the country side that we're talking about in this case.

Historically, I have a lot of empathy for what we're talking about here. If there is any reason for fighting this we can look at climate change, but if you get closer to the ground, and a lot of the testifiers have talked to that, that's where people's lives are effected, and they're going to be effected here in Helena, in Missoula, and everywhere along the railroad line. To take geologic carbon out of the ground and transform it into CO2 makes zero sense at all. Whatever happened to values? Neil Armstrong raised the awareness of the value of this earth, and it caused our legislature, our congress, to enact the clean air water act in 1972. It seems like that's been eroded over the last 20 or 30 years to the point now where a cost benefit analysis takes the place of values. We need to return to a value benefit analysis not an economic analysis. Thank you very much.