

E1-21329
COMMISSIONER OF SECURITIES & INSURANCE

MONICA J. LINDEEN
COMMISSIONER



OFFICE OF THE MONTANA
STATE AUDITOR

2016 FEB -9 PM 1:39
OFFICE OF CHAIRMAN

January 26, 2016

Daniel R. Elliott III, Chairman
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20423-0001

Re: Finance Docket No. 30186

Dear Chairman Elliott,

On November 25, 2015, the Tongue River Railroad Company filed a petition with the Surface Transportation Board to hold its application for construction and operation of a rail line in Montana in abeyance. On December 11, 2015, the Northern Plains Resource Council and Rocker Six Cattle Company filed a motion with the Board to dismiss TRRC's application with prejudice. I am writing today to support NPRC and Rocker Six Cattle Company's motion.

For over 30 years TRRC has been held over the head of Montanans. Even though the company has, at times, held the necessary authorization to construct the railroad, it never did so. For over 30 years landowners, including the State of Montana, have had to navigate with unnecessary uncertainty in their operations.

The various alternatives cross a number of parcels of state-owned land including the 18,000 acre plus Tongue River Ranch. As a member of Montana's Board of Land Commissioners, I have to make already difficult decisions about the management of state-owned land. These decisions are made more difficult with the uncertainty of if, when and where a potential railroad may be sited.

This matter has gone on too long. The TRRC has wasted three decades of the resources of the Board and the citizens of Montana with its ever-changing routes and applications. It is time for Montana to move on from the Tongue River Railroad. Montana deserves a conclusion to this issue. I urge you to grant NPRC and Rocker Six Cattle Company's motion to dismiss Tongue River Railroad's application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Monica J. Lindeen".

Monica J. Lindeen