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Organization:

State: Montana

Agency: Surface Transportation Board

Initiative: Tongue River Railroad

Submission Text

Lynn Jennings

207 East 14th Street, Helena, Montana 59601 My name is Lynn Jennings, and I live here in Helena. Some of what I'm going to say has already been said, but I'm going to say it again. We Montanans are not naive, gullible, backwards people who aren't aware that building the Tongue River Railroad would tear up our land, destroy water quality, ruin wildlife habitat, destroy Native American cultural and sacred sites, destroy southeastern Montanans' livelihoods, increase coal train traffic and coal dust, increase health hazards, and add billions of tons of new green house gas emissions into the atmosphere. Southeastern Montana has already suffered all of these impacts due to mining and coal transport being done there for decades.

When we continue to allow the insidious encroachment of corporations that disguise the devastation of our lands behind phrases like boosting the economy, providing jobs, revenue for the state, opening the Otter Creek Coal Mine will be better for climate than leaving the coal in the ground, lower cost of energy, and clean coal. We all lose. We lose our clean air, our clean water, and the very wildness of our land. We diminish our relationships to the earth.

The proposed plan for the Tongue River Railroad development is fatuous and wrong for Montana. I'd like to read a poem called The Requiem by Kurt Vonnegut.

The crucified planet Earth, should it find a voice and a sense of irony, might now well say of our abuse of it, "Forgive them, Father, they know what they do." The irony would be that we know what we are doing. When the last living thing has died on account of us, how poetical it would be if earth could say, in a voice floating up perhaps from the floor of the Grand Canyon, "It is done." People did not like it here.

I think this is where we're going with the Tongue River Railroad. I'd like to know why the Surface Transportation board ignored and failed to include in the draft EIS the impact to the western rail line towns and cities that we all know coal will be transported through. As we say in Montana the Surface Transportation board needs to "cowboy up", tell the truth, do what's right for all of us and give a damn about the earth.

Choose the no action alternative.