

Submission Number: *FD-30186-000263*

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Commenter: Kirsten Hands

Organization: The City of Missoula

State: Montana

Agency: Surface Transportation Board

Initiative: Tongue River Railroad

Submission Text

Please see the attached Resolution 8005 of the Missoula City Council. Submitted by Kirsten Hands, Deputy City Clerk, City of Missoula.

RESOLUTION NUMBER 8005

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MISSOULA, MONTANA REGARDING THE TONGUE RIVER RAILROAD DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT, REQUESTING THAT THE SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD ADDRESS DEFICIENCIES IN THE TONGUE RIVER RAILROAD DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT, AND RECOMMENDING A “NO ACTION” ALTERNATIVE.

Whereas, the City of Missoula passed Resolution 7877 in 2014 asking the US Surface Transportation Board (STB) to hold a public hearing in Missoula during the official public comment period on the draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Tongue River Railroad (TRR); and

Whereas, the STB declined to hold a hearing on the TRR in Missoula, and also failed to adequately analyze possible impacts on communities in Western Montana from increased coal train traffic that would result from building the TRR; and

Whereas, market trends and coal companies' own statements clearly indicate that the primary incentive for building new coal mines in Montana is to send coal to overseas markets; and

Whereas, the Montana Rail Link line that passes through Missoula is one of the most direct routes by which trains hauling coal from the TRR could reach existing or proposed West Coast export terminals; and

Whereas, the draft EIS failed to analyze special circumstances in Missoula that make additional coal train traffic especially concerning, including the close proximity of Missoula residential neighborhoods to the railroad coupling yard and refueling station; and

Whereas, the draft EIS failed to adequately address impacts affecting at-grade crossings, including Missoula's Madison Street; and

Whereas, the draft EIS fails to demonstrate public benefits that outweigh the costs of rail impacts in Missoula; and

Whereas, many Missoula residents, organizations, and governmental entities have spoken out repeatedly about negative air and noise pollution impacts from coal trains, and the Missoula City Council has passed multiple resolutions on this topic;

Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Missoula City Council requests that in the final Environmental Impact Statement on the Tongue River Railroad, the STB thoroughly analyze possible health and environmental impacts from increased coal train traffic in Missoula that would result from building the TRR;

Be it further resolved the Missoula City Council urges the STB select the “no action” alternative for the proposed Tongue River Railroad project.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this 21st day of September, 2015.

ATTEST:

APPROVED:

/s/ Martha L. Rehbein
Martha L. Rehbein, CMC
City Clerk

/s/ John Engen
John Engen
Mayor