

Received: 9/23/2015 12:00:00 AM

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Organization:

State: Montana

Agency: Surface Transportation Board

Initiative: Tongue River Railroad

Submission Text

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My name is John Hollow; I live at 800 Second Street in Helena, Montana. My son is a Coast Guard rescue swimmer, and never before has the US Coast Guard ever been stationed in Barrows. We are now stationed in Barrows because of global warming. It exposes him. It exposes the natives that live in that area because of the waters that get some time to build up to destroy their cities. That's point one. We've got to think beyond whatever value Arch Coal has to Arch Coal Company.

Two, I had a small construction project last year. Every contractor... Well, no contractor is perfect. A contractor in Helena going from a site south of town to a site north of town because the three or four places to buy are north of the tracks. Just for anybody that builds in town, the disruption of more train traffic, stopping people from just running an errand, is huge.

Next, schools. Helena is about to build schools on the north side of the tracks for high schools. That means every kid in Helena which is about 40% of our student population is going to have to cross the tracks, and there's only two places to cross them. They're not going to choose those two places because it's further. Please consider Helena students in thinking about whether you allow this railroad.

Three, Helena is now 23 million dollars behind in terms of project. If you add a 21 million dollar project to the cost of the Helena citizens to go over Montana Avenue, which is our main route north, south it's not fair. We shouldn't have to pay for it and it shouldn't be built. Whether you're talking about allowing Russia to patrol around Alaska because of open water because of global warming and exposing coast guard people up there, whether you're talking about students trying to get to school, or whether you're talking about cost to a city from a project, none of it makes sense.

Lastly, when this coal really declines, not just the 30 or 40% it's already declined as use, what's going to happen to the ranchers down in that area is the tracks will become storage tracks, much like our tracks going north of Helena towards Wolf Creek. So you've not only bisected a ranch, and you've not only stopped the springs from flowing down hill into the river and creating pools where mosquitoes are harbored, but you're going to now stop the cows from even going over the tracks because you're going to be storing your coal cars there when they're not used anywhere else.

Thank you.