

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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Hello everyone here and at the Surface Transportation Board. My name is Dave Morris. I live at 2120 Missoula Avenue here in Missoula. Like our last speaker, I am an educator. I instruct college students on field courses. I've been taking university students from the University of Montana and many other colleges and universities across the country to southeast Montana for about 14 years, and going to the Otter Creek Valley, going to the Tongue River country, and meeting with community members, elected officials, many people in the Northern Cheyenne tribe, many ranchers, including Jeanie Alderson who was in that film, who I think we're going to hear a little more about soon.

It is an amazingly vibrant area. It's incredibly important culturally, ecologically, economically to the people who live there in particular and beyond the great productivity of the valleys. The idea of those valleys being sacrificed in order to enrich people who are already rich beyond belief, and at the cost of the ecology and the cultures and all these amazing values that exist in those places, it will be travesty.

I would just add also that I would find it very ironic were we to mine all that coal and increase the danger of catastrophic fires. Anyone who's been through that part of the country knows that in the past five years or so, there have been unprecedented fires burning through the very same country that they have proposed mine to release more carbon into the air; turbo-charged fires. It's just incredibly ironic.

I would very very strongly encourage the Surface Transportation Board to follow the no action alternative and to deny the obscene Tongue River Railroad project. We can't afford to sacrifice those amazing places for private profit. Thank you.