

3851 Duncan Drive
Missoula, MT 59802
June 17, 2015

Surface Transportation Board
TRR Draft EIS Comments

To whom it may concern;

I live down-rail from the proposed Tongue River Railroad. If the TRR is built and followed by a coal mine, rail traffic in my town will increase by an estimated 25 trains per day. There are two roads in and out of the Rattlesnake Valley in which I live. One is blocked by a railroad crossing. Thousands of people live in the Rattlesnake Valley.

Twenty-five additional trains per day create a significant impact on communities downrail from Tongue River. Communities must absorb the costs of additional overpasses, crossing guard signs/barriers and the additional wait time for commuters and emergency vehicles at railroad crossings.

In addition to these down-rail concerns, the Tongue River itself will be impacted by this railroad. According to the Northern Plains Resource Council, the fisheries in the Tongue River were not inventoried by the EIS. How can a draft EIS along a river NOT inventory fisheries?! According to Montana river experts Hank and Carol Fischer, the Tongue River contains one of Montana's few **smallmouth bass** fisheries. The river also provides habitat for **northern pike, walleyes, sauger, and catfish**. In the lower river, anglers can find **paddlefish and shovelnose sturgeon**, two ancient fish species.

In the end, this is a project that does very little to benefit Montanans. It cuts across small ranches and threatens the lifestyles of the families that live there. It threatens a prairie river and all the fish species that live there. It will significantly disrupt a riparian zone that contains half the bird species that can be found in Montana. Its reach extends across the state with increased rail traffic and coal dust. The TRR does all this to yield profits for an out-of-state company that will ship coal overseas. Arch Coal threatens to continue the pattern of raping and running that is all too familiar to Montanans.

I humbly request that you do not approve this project.

Sincerely,



Kathy Heffernan