

Received: 9/3/2015 12:02:06 PM

Commenter: Doris Fischer

Organization:

State: Montana

Agency: Surface Transportation Board

Initiative: Tongue River Railroad

Submission Text

I am writing to urge selection of the No-Action Alternative. It's clear to me that the Draft EIS has identified numerous adverse environmental impacts associated with all of the Action Alternatives. Our land, water, and wildlife resources in the Tongue River Valley of Montana are too precious, to risk their degradation at best and loss at worst. Just because some of the impacted area is not "high-value" habitat for many fish and wildlife species, that does not mean it serves an insignificant function in the ecosystem. Just because certain species are "secure" and not vulnerable now does not mean they would withstand the extensive disruption caused by railroad construction, railroad operation, and subsequent mining operations. The introduction of such a major utility line into this fragile environment will fragment this intact landscape and ruin it. The location of all action alternatives is perilously close to the Tongue River, and in an area relied upon by different wildlife species at different times of the year. In addition, those who make their living off the land in the Tongue River Valley would no longer have "secure" livelihoods. No mining of coal is worth such upheaval and social/economic/cultural disturbance. Please select the No-Action Alternative. Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the Draft EIS.