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Organization:

State:

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Initiative: Tongue River Railroad

Submission Text

Suzette Tusso

Good evening. I'm Suzette Tusso. I am a resident of Missoula. I have been here all my life. I just want to say thank you to my friends and neighbors who are showing up, for speaking up as we have done many, many, many times over the years to protect our state that we cherish because we realize what a treasure state it is. Also, for our beautiful community which will have detrimental effects from the result of coal mining in eastern Montana.

Many of us had been showing up, speaking up, working, fighting, petitioning, protesting, marching, walking, abstracting vehicles to protect our beautiful state. For years, we have asked, we've wondered, we've questioned why do we continue to follow down this path of such a destructive path of our world and why we do not develop cleaner alternatives for energy. We have asked this question for years.

I recognized that coal is an archaic source of energy production. It has polluted our air. It has destroyed our landscape. It has destroyed our communities. It has sickened our people from its inception, not only in the United States but also across Europe and across the world.

In Montana particularly, this particular project will destroy native Montana habitat that is precious to our state. It will destroy our groundwater resources that are essential to farmers and our communities. It will destroy native cultural and heritage sites. It will destroy part of who we are as a community across the state. It will impact many, many people across the state from the residue of the coal dust traveling through the communities.

Who is to gain, who is to profit from this? It is not the people of Montana. It is those that are very wealthy, those that are very powerful and that continue to hold Montana in a copper collar as they have done since the days of the copper kings. Of course, we Montanans stand up and we say no more and we have won many, many battles.

I encourage you as the national Surface Transportation Board to recognize the folly of this project, to recognize the harmful effects that it will have not only on our state, but on our nation, on our world, and to please do not approve this project. Say no to the approval of the Tongue River Railroad.

Thank you for allowing us to have this opportunity to visit with you and we will of course invite you to our beautiful community, to our beautiful state to see for yourself what we are fighting again for. Thank you.