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Fw: Tongue River Railroad
Brian O'Boyle to: Vicki Rutson

11/14/2012 11:57 AM

From: Brian O'Boyle/STB
To: Vicki Rutson/STB@STB

From: "Bruce MacIntyre" <Bruce@billingschamber.com>
To: <Brian.OBoyle@stb.dot.gov>
Date: 11/14/2012 11:19 AM
Subject: Tongue River Railroad

Brian,

Would you please add the attached to the testimony received a for the Tongue River Railroad.

Thanks,

Bruce

Bruce MacIntyre
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Tongue River railroad.docx

Billings Chamber/CVB Supports Tongue River Railroad Project

November 13, 2012—A key to energy development in Montana is the ability to move natural resources from area of development to the ultimate market. For the past 30 years the Tongue River Railroad project (which would bring coal from the Otter Creek Mine to market) has been studied, dissected and discussed, and roadblocks have been thrown in front of the progress at every step of the way. This week the Federal Surface Transportation Board is meeting throughout eastern Montana to hear concerns by environmental groups bent on stopping this short 80 mile rail spur.

On behalf of our 1,170 members and their employees who number over 44,000, the Billings Chamber of Commerce/Convention & Visitors Bureau encourages the forward progress of this spur without more environmental studies.

Responsible energy exploration and development on public and private lands is crucial to resolving our nation's energy crisis and building Montana's economy. We recognize the significance of coal production to the state economy and financial assistance it affords local communities throughout Montana. The responsible and timely development of new coal mines will provide a much needed economic boost to Montana. We therefore support efforts that will enable new coal production to occur, including the development of railroad infrastructure and securing access to federal and state-owned coal reserves.

The economic impact to Eastern Montana in general and the Billings area specifically is enormous and we need to facilitate, not hinder this process. A June 2012 University of Montana study of the potential of Otter Creek, shows the economic impact to Montana would be \$200 million yearly. The mine would generate \$92 million in state and local taxes, create hundreds of jobs locally and across the state, and increase the state's population by nearly 3,000 people (Billings Gazette http://billingsgazette.com/news/state-and-regional/montana/um-report-says-otter-creek-coal-mine-would-bring-m/article_426fb7a0-bf29-568c-bda3-c21de405f4fb.html).

Proposed Tongue River Map: http://billingsgazette.com/news/state-and-regional/montana/tongue-river-railroad-map/image_015b40b2-b8d9-58cd-8bf6-faf4b2a25623.html

Article from Billings Gazette 11/12/12: http://billingsgazette.com/news/state-and-regional/montana/montana-coal-railroad-line-faces-federal-review/article_a7dcd729-6394-5020-b7b8-f0bf1640dfd8.html