

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. My name is Trevein Stranger. I live at 2404 Rattlesnake Drive here in Missoula. Thanks everyone for this chance to speak, and thanks to the folks on the receiving end of this, at the Surface Transportation Board, and recognizing this as part of your job. I bet that it's not an easy part of your job, but we are some of the folks you represent. Thanks for hearing us out.

I am a garden educator here in town. All week I've been working with little kids, kindergarten through fifth graders at Lowell Elementary School, which is in the north side, not very far from the railroad in question.

A garden is an amazing place to talk about a lot of the things that we all value in this country. They are certain American values, and I'd say universal values, family values: self-sufficiency, hard work, attentiveness, cooperation, industriousness, so many things we want to pass on to our kids. I think no matter where you land on the political stripe, you see value in gardening and teaching it to kids.

This week we're talking about the health of our plants, how much they give us clean air, the health of the food that we're going to eat from this garden. When you talk to kids, there isn't much room for abstraction. There isn't necessarily room for obfuscation. Right? You just have to say it like it is, and kids can call you out on it if you're saying otherwise.

The same day that we are teaching kids how to be good gardeners and teaching them to value some of these things, we are simultaneously building things right outside the gate that are sending in harmful dust, that are sending in harmful agents. We're undermining what we're trying to do in the garden. That would seem like an incredible, strange paradox for those kids, wouldn't it? They'd probably call us out on it.

Folks you really know these problems we are talking about are pretty abstract for a kid's mind, but really if they could get their head around it, maybe they'd be calling us out on it and maybe they'd be really asking us to consider their future, consider the fact that they're probably going to want to pass some of these things on that we're talking about, and they're sort of counting on us. They are oddly sort of the most dispossessed people on the planet, right?

If someone is dispossessed or disempowered is one who does not have a voice, these kids can't really come here and speak up, but we're the ones who get to. So, I'm really asking folks to keep that in mind. How many gardens, how many schools are along these lines? How many of these children who, as we've said, have very fragile, beautiful, little angelic lungs that look like trees in there, like all of ours. We all share these lungs, we all share this air. There's a lot more going on than just the immediate profit that the other folks are talking about.

Please consider the broader picture. Please understand there's more logic than the one you are hearing from them. Please understand there's much, much more ethics and right and wrong than they're ever going to introduce for you. Thank you for listening to us.