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Commenter: Colin Lauderdale

Organization: Northern Plains Resource Council

State: Montana

Agency: Surface Transportation Board

Initiative: Tongue River Railroad

Submission Text

Please see attached letter.



Victoria Rutson, Director
Office of Environmental Analysis
Surface Transportation Board
395 E. Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20423

April 21, 2015

Dear Ms. Rutson:

On behalf of Northern Plains Resource Council (Northern Plains) members, I am writing to request that the Surface Transportation Board (STB) grant a 60-day extension to the public comment period allowed for the Tongue River Railroad (TRR) draft environmental impact statement (DEIS). We believe that granting the public 120 days to review and comment on this important document is warranted.

As you are aware, May and June are busy months for those of us who work in agriculture; farmers and ranchers put in many hours each day often from early morning until late at night. This document's length and magnitude will require time to read, understand, and prepare substantive comments. This proposed project has negatively impacted area residents' (including many of our members') lives and livelihoods for years. Given the very real stake that these folks have in this project, especially those landowners along the various routes who potentially face condemnation, we believe that it is only fair to extend the comment period and allow time for the attention and due diligence that this proposed project deserves.

Additionally, the intense public interest in this project from other Montanans, Native American tribes, local governments, various public elected officials, and the hundreds of individuals who have submitted scoping comments on this project, indicate the need to ensure all have time to weigh in with their comments. Consequently, we respectfully request that the STB extend the public comment period on the TRR DEIS to 120 days.

Sincerely,

Steve Charter, Chair
Northern Plains Resource Council



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