

Wayland, Joshua

From: Ryan Beam <RBeam@biologicaldiversity.org>
Sent: Wednesday, June 19, 2019 12:41 PM
To: Wayland, Joshua
Subject: SCIC Rail Route Maps
Attachments: UBR Pre Scoping Letter.pdf

Hey Josh,

I saw that the NOI for the Uinta Basin Railway was published this morning. Congrats on your work there!

I was wondering if you can provide detailed maps or better yet GIS data for the three routes. The NOI mentions that maps are available at www.uintabasinrailwayeis.com, but that link is broken. The best maps I have access to at the moment are those included in the attached.

Thanks,
Ryan

Ryan Beam, *Public Lands Campaigner*
CENTER for BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY
Pronouns: he/him/his
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SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
Washington, DC 20423
Office of Environmental Analysis

RECEIVED
APR 23 2019
BY: *[Signature]*

April 10, 2019

Carmen Bailey
Deputy Director
Utah Public Lands Policy Coordinating Office
350 North State Street, 5th Floor, Suite 5110
Salt Lake City, UT 84103

Re: Docket No. FD 36284, Seven County Infrastructure Coalition—Construction & Operation Exemption—in Utah, Carbon, Duchesne, and Uinta Counties, Utah

Dear Dr. Carmen Bailey:

I am writing to let you know about and request your preliminary comments on a forthcoming proposal to build an approximately 80-mile line of railroad to transport commodities and products into and out of the Uinta Basin in northeastern Utah. The proponent of the proposed project is the Seven County Infrastructure Coalition (the Coalition), an intergovernmental entity established by the counties of Carbon, Daggett, Duchesne, Emery, San Juan, Sevier, and Uintah in Utah. The Coalition intends to file a petition or an application with the Surface Transportation Board (the Board) seeking authority to construct and operate the proposed rail line. Before granting such authority, the Board must consider the potential environmental impacts of the Coalition's proposal, pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and related laws.

The Board's Office of Environmental Analysis (OEA) intends to begin the process of preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that will analyze the potential environmental impacts of the proposed rail line. OEA will develop the EIS in consultation with appropriate federal, state, and local agencies; tribes; other interested stakeholders; and the public. This project is similar to a proposal that the Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) considered beginning in 2012, but that previous proposal was not carried forward and the NEPA process was not completed. There have also been prior studies on different variations of this proposal dating to before 2012 that were not carried forward.

The purpose of this letter is to advise you of the proposed rail line project and request preliminary information from your agency regarding the resources under your jurisdiction that could be affected by the proposed rail line construction and operation, as well as any permits and approvals that could be required of the Coalition as part of the proposed project that OEA should consider in undertaking its environmental review.

Project Background

Currently, all freight moving into and out of the Uinta Basin is transported by truck on one of three public highways. The proposed project would provide a new transportation option by connecting industries in the basin to the interstate freight rail network. Based on current market conditions, the Coalition estimates that approximately seven trains would move along the proposed rail line per day, on average, including loaded and unloaded trains. Rail traffic entering the Uinta Basin would likely move such products and commodities as fracturing sand, proppant, tubular steel, and oil industry machinery from the Midwest, Texas, the Southeast, and ports on the Pacific and Gulf coasts. Outbound trains would likely carry crude oil, gilsonite, and other mineral and agricultural products to markets across the U.S., including oil refineries in the Salt Lake City area, the Mississippi River Valley, the Chicago area, the Ohio River Valley, and the Pacific, Gulf, and Atlantic coasts.

The Coalition has evaluated potential routes connecting the Uinta Basin to the national rail network and has identified three alternative routes (Figure 1) that would be both engineeringly and commercially feasible. Those proposed alternatives are the Indian Canyon Route, the Craig Route, and the Wells Draw Route, as described in further detail below:

- The Indian Canyon Route would be approximately 80 miles long and would connect an existing rail line owned by Union Pacific Railway Company (UP) near Kyune, Utah to a terminus point in the Uinta Basin near Leland Bench, approximately 9.5 miles south of Fort Duchesne, Utah (Figure 2). Starting at Leland Bench, this route would proceed westward, past the South Myton Bench area, until intersecting Indian Canyon approximately two miles south of Duchesne, Utah. After entering Indian Canyon, the route would turn southwest and follow Indian Creek upstream toward its headwaters below Indian Creek Pass, paralleling U.S. Highway 191 for approximately 21 miles. The Indian Canyon Route would use a summit tunnel to pass through the West Tavaputs Plateau and, after emerging from the tunnel, would descend the Roan Cliffs to reach Emma Park, an open grassy area at the base of the Roan Cliffs. The route would then run westward through Emma Park and connect to the UP Provo Subdivision near the railroad timetable station at Kyune. The route would cross land owned or managed by the State of Utah, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and the Ute Indian Tribe. At this time, the Coalition has identified the Indian Canyon Route as its preferred alternative.
- The Craig Route would be approximately 185 miles long and would connect an existing UP rail line near Axial, Colorado to two terminus points in the Uinta Basin near South Myton Bench and Leland Bench (Figure 3). The lines from those two terminus points would meet at a junction approximately four miles north of Leland Bench. From the junction, the Craig Route would proceed generally northward for approximately seven miles, then turn and proceed generally eastward, crossing the Green River approximately

five miles south of Jensen, Utah. The route would then proceed southeasterly, entering Colorado approximately three miles northwest of Dinosaur, Colorado and would connect to the Deseret Power Railroad (DPR) south of Dinosaur. The Craig Route would utilize approximately 13 miles of the DPR to proceed eastward and would depart the DPR approximately two miles west of the Deserado Mine. It would then proceed generally eastward to connect to the UP Craig Subdivision near the railroad timetable station at Axial. This route would cross land owned or managed by the BLM, the State of Colorado, and the State of Utah. It would not cross USFS or tribal land.

- The Wells Draw Route would be approximately 105 miles long and would connect an existing UP rail line near Kyune, Utah to two terminus points in the Uinta Basin near South Myton Bench and Leland Bench (Figure 4). The lines from those two terminus points would meet at a junction approximately 6.5 miles south of South Myton Bench. From the junction, the Wells Draw Route would run southward, generally following Wells Draw towards its headwaters. After reaching the headwaters of Wells Draw, the route would turn westward and enter Argyle Canyon. It would remain on the north wall of Argyle Canyon for approximately 25 miles, eventually reaching the floor of the canyon near the headwaters of Argyle Creek. The route would then enter a summit tunnel through the West Tavaputs Plateau and, after emerging from the tunnel, would descend the Roan Cliffs to reach Emma Park. The route would run westward through Emma Park and connect to the UP Provo Subdivision near the railroad timetable station at Kyune. The Wells Draw Route would cross land owned or managed by the BLM and the State of Utah. It would not cross USFS or tribal land.

Maps of the three proposed alternatives are appended to this letter. Because the Coalition has not yet completed the final engineering design for the three routes, the appended maps depict the centerlines of three study corridors defined by the Coalition that may be wider than the actual rail rights-of-way. OEA will provide copies of more detailed maps of the proposed alternative routes as they become available. OEA will review the proposed alternatives and develop the final set of alternatives to be examined in the EIS in consultation with appropriate federal, state, and local agency; tribes; other interested stakeholders; and the public during the scoping process, which will begin when the Board issues a Notice of Intent to prepare the EIS.

Environmental Review Process

Pursuant to the regulations of the Council on Environmental Quality implementing NEPA (40 C.F.R. §§ 1500-1508) and the Board's environmental rules at 49 C.F.R. § 1105, OEA will work as the lead federal agency to prepare an EIS that will evaluate the potential environmental effects of the Coalition's proposal, including reasonable and feasible alternatives, as well as the No-Action alternative. Based on information submitted by the Coalition, OEA's independent investigations, and consultation with other federal, state, and local agencies; tribes; other stakeholders; and members of the public, OEA will prepare a Draft EIS and issue that

document for public review and comment. OEA will then prepare a Final EIS that will respond to public and agency comments on the Draft EIS and set forth OEA's final recommendations to the Board. OEA will be assisted in conducting its environmental review by ICF Jones & Stokes, Inc., an environmental consulting company that will be serving as OEA's third-party environmental contractor in this case.

Request for Comments

We would like to hear from you whether, based on the preliminary information known about the proposed rail line, any resources under your jurisdiction or expertise could potentially be affected by the Coalition's proposal, and whether it could require permitting or approval from your agency. We request your response by May 9, 2019 so that we may begin the process of identifying the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project.

Please send your written comments to Joshua Wayland, OEA's Project Manager for the EIS, by email at Joshua.Wayland@stb.gov or by mail to:

Joshua Wayland
Surface Transportation Board
c/o ICF
9300 Lee Highway
Fairfax, VA 22031

If you have any questions or would like to arrange a meeting or conference call with OEA, please feel free to contact Joshua Wayland by phone at (202) 245-0330 or by email. We greatly appreciate your assistance and look forward to your participation in the Board's environmental review process for this project.

Sincerely,



Victoria Rutson
Director
Office of Environmental Analysis

Enclosures:

Figure 1 - Uinta Basin Railway Proposed Routes

Figure 2 - Indian Canyon Route

Figure 3 - Craig Route

Figure 4 - Wells Draw Route









