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Submission Text

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My name is Tim Holmes, H-O-L-M-E-S. I'm a Helenan. I'm very much opposed to the expansion of this project. I'm really concerned about the invisible costs. We like to innumerate the things that are easy for us to see, but there's no way we can innumerate the things that we can't see. I am a sufferer of respiratory problems and in the spring time and the fall I like to be able to say oh yeah, this is the pollen season so that's why I'm breathing this way. With more coal particulates in the air, it affects every one of us, and my condition is going to get worse as well as anybody else, regardless of how healthy they are.

But I don't walk to talk about myself. I want to talk about a different story that I heard about recently, when I was talking to my sister about the Tongue River expansion project. She takes her daughter across the tracks to go to school at Lincoln School. When I told her there was going to be more trains on the line, she started enumerating all of the difficulties that that would present to her and her daughter. She started out by saying, "I am just one person and this is one example of how this is going to disrupt our community". Again, this is an invisible consequence. If her daughter is late getting to school because of a train crossing the daughter is going to get in trouble at school, she's going to miss part of her educational day, and my sister misses time from work. If one day she has to go and pick up her daughter who is sick from school, it causes mental anguish as well as health ... I don't know how you innumerate the difficulty in that kind of a situation, where you're worried about your daughter and you can't get to her, or you can't get back to get her to the hospital if that's necessary. These are the kinds of issues that every one of us in the community faces. Sometimes we're just running an errand and it doesn't matter if I'm getting some bolts at the hardware store. It doesn't really matter all that much if I'm delayed, but sometimes it is a very critical situation, and there's no way we can plan for this.

In addition to the things that Shiloh mentioned, the pollutants and the particulates that we have to put up with and the noise and everything else, there are these invisible issues that become very hard for us to be able to even imagine. This is an example because I've been really trying to stay ahead of these issues and be educated on this stuff. I have never thought about what this does to the parent of a kid just in the daily business of taking your kid to and from school, four trips a day. If any one of those trips is interrupted with another train that's another thing that the people in the community have to pay for. So, I am absolutely opposed to this.

Thank you.