

Submission Number: *FD-30186-000253*

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Commenter: Peggy Trenk

Organization: Treasure State Resource Industry Association

State: Montana

Agency: Surface Transportation Board

Initiative: Tongue River Railroad

Submission Text

Please find our written comments attached. The Treasure State Resource Industry Association would like to go on record in support of the Draft EIS.



September 21, 2015

Ken Blodgett
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20423-0001

RE: Environmental Filing, Docket No. FD 30186

Dear Mr. Blodgett,

The membership of the Treasure State Resource Industry Association (TSRIA) would like to go on record in support of the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed Tongue River Railroad Construction and Operation.

TSRIA represents a diverse range of organizations and individuals involved in the natural resource industries in Montana. That includes: trade unions, small businesses, agriculture, timber and wood products, coal and hard rock mining, construction, manufacturing, transportation, electricity generation and transmission, oil and gas exploration and production and recreation. We promote responsible natural resource development and reasonable environmental regulation in Montana and strive to help create opportunities for natural resource-based job growth and economic development.

We have long recognized what the Tongue River Railroad project could mean to the economic well being of the State of Montana. This project, which is key to developing the Otter Creek Coal Reserves, has the potential to significantly improve the quality of life for thousands of southeast Montana residents and provide benefits to the rest of the state as well.

A study completed by the University of Montana Bureau of Business and Economic Research in April 2012 concluded construction of the Tongue River Railroad and the Otter Creek Coal Mine would create over 2,600 construction jobs, 1,740 permanent jobs and over \$100 million in annual tax revenue. Montana families, and Montana schools would benefit directly.

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We appreciate the work that has been done to identify and mitigate any potential environmental concerns. As a result, TSRIA believes this project can and should go forward and that it will bring positive benefits to our state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Peggy Trenk". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Peggy" being more prominent than the last name "Trenk".

Peggy Trenk
Executive Director
P.O. Box 1700
Helena Montana 59624