

Morgan Vinyard
438 S 5th St. E
Missoula MT, 59801

21 September, 2015

Mr. Ken Blodgett
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20423
ATTN: Office of Environmental Analysis
Docket No. 30186

Dear Mr. Blodgett,

The necessarily negative consequences—biological, cultural, and economic—do not merit the building of the proposed Tongue River railroad. The Environmental Impact Statement admits degradation of surface water, groundwater, air, farmland, private property, and more. Not addressed, however, are the ways in which the loss of the above irreplaceable resources will adversely affect the whole state of Montana. For instance, the modification of waterways will disturb the whole Tongue River, Rosebud Creek, and Yellowstone watersheds, not just the affected stream reaches. These broadly-reaching affects are not justified by the benefits of the proposed projects.

Furthermore, the effects of the degradation of air quality in Missoula and other communities along the route should be addressed by this study given the potential for the shipment of coal through our valley on the way to Asian markets. As the EIS stands right now, it does not adequately explore the potential effects of increased coal train traffic to the west of the proposed Otter Creek Mine. As such, it should not be approved.

Finally, the Otter Creek Mine is still just a proposal. Given that the purpose and need for this rail line lies only on the existence of said proposed mine, I believe that no part of the railroad should be considered for approval until this mine is approved.

Please select the No-Action Alternative for this plan.

Sincerely,
Morgan Vinyard