

Surface Transportation Board

Incoming Correspondence Record



#EI-19002

Correspondence Information

Docket #:	FD 30186 0	Date Received:	11/07/2012
Name of Sender:	Russell Blalack	Date of Letter:	11/07/2012
Group:	Russell Blalack		

Submitter's Comments

I am opposed to granting this lease for the following reasons.

- 1) Arch Coal has leased 1.3 billion tons of coal in the Otter Creek area. If that coal is dug up and hauled off, the inevitable burning of the coal will result in about 2.6 billion tons of greenhouse gases going into an already overloaded atmosphere. The acid fall out and other noxious by products will be blown back into our front yard, the Western United States.
- 2) Construction and use of the Tongue River Railroad will bring hardship, destruction, and loss of livelihood to all ranchers on this proposed and unnecessary railroad.

Sincerely,
Russell Blalack
owner/rancher Section 26, T1N R31E
nr Hardin Montana

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#EI-19003

Correspondence Information

Docket #:	FD 30186 0	Date Received:	11/07/2012
Name of Sender:	Mary Schaad	Date of Letter:	11/07/2012
Group:			

Submitter's Comments

Arch Coal is seeking a permit to strip mine Otter Creek coal. The analysis of this proposal should include a full environmental impact statement that comprehensively considers the environmental and economic impacts this line will have on climate change, agricultural operations, communities, and rail transport. We don't want more dirty coal displacing the hauling of Montana's agricultural commodities, and impacting the health of our communities.

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#EI-19004

Correspondence Information

Docket #:	FD 30186 0	Date Received:	11/07/2012
Name of Sender:	Edd Blackler	Date of Letter:	11/07/2012
Group:			

Submitter's Comments

Please enter these comments in your record.

I feel that the environmental analysis should include a full-blown environmental impact statement that comprehensively considers the environmental and economic impacts this line will have on climate change, agricultural operations, communities, and rail transport.

More than the projected 2.6 billion tons of greenhouse gas emissions that will result from the development of the Otter Creek tracts alone.

Due consideration for the impact on the health and economy of the community must be given, as well as how this proposal will change the way of life for these local citizens.

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#EI-19006

Correspondence Information

Docket #:	FD 30186 0	Date Received:	11/07/2012
Name of Sender:	Claudia S. Brown	Date of Letter:	11/07/2012
Group:	MEIC		

Submitter's Comments

Reducing carbon emissions is imperative. A new rail line will lead to increased coal mining, hauling and burning of coal, the dirtiest fuel. This rail project must have a thorough environmental analysis that considers its effect on climate change, agricultural operations, communities, and rail transport.

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#EI-19007

Correspondence Information

Docket #:	FD 30186 0	Date Received:	11/07/2012
Name of Sender:	Sarah Craig	Date of Letter:	11/07/2012
Group:			

Submitter's Comments

Dear Mr. Blodgett,

I am writing to oppose the 83-mile railroad line to transport coal through the pristine Tongue River Valley. I believe that the Surface Transportation Board should take these following issues into account before further action.

1. Approval of the Tongue River railroad will have a major impact on our way of life, the health of our communities, and our economy. We don't want more dirty coal trains clogging up our rail lines, disrupting our communities, and displacing the hauling of Montana's agricultural commodities.
2. The environmental analysis should include a full-blown environmental impact statement that comprehensively considers the environmental and economic impacts this line will have on climate change, agricultural operations, communities, and rail transport.
3. It is imperative that you consider the climate change impacts of digging, hauling, and burning 1.3 billion tons of coal. The analysis must consider the possibility that a new rail line could lead to the digging, hauling and burning of other coal resources in the area, contributing even more than the projected 2.6 billion tons of greenhouse gas emissions that will result from the development of the Otter Creek tracts alone.

I hope you take these points into consideration. Thank you very much.

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#EI-19009

Correspondence Information

Docket #:	FD 30186 0	Date Received:	11/07/2012
Name of Sender:	Linda Eichwald	Date of Letter:	11/07/2012
Group:			

Submitter's Comments

Whether coal is healthy is not an debatable. Whether the mining is good for the environment is not debatable. Whether a railroad is put in Mt. to haul the coal should be carefull studied and considered as part of our values in Montana. Not just a bottom line profit motive. Please slow this down and do your job to protect the land and it's people. Thank you for your consideration. Sincerely, Linda Eichwald

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#EI-19010

Correspondence Information

Docket #:	FD 30186 0	Date Received:	11/07/2012
Name of Sender:	William E Clawson II	Date of Letter:	11/07/2012
Group:			

Submitter's Comments

The Tongue River railroad is a very bad idea. Please take into consideration that Montana has clean air and water for the most and our biggest problem with their quality is coal. In addition to that, this project would release 2.6 billion tons of greenhouse gas. Our planet's climate is at risk. Please do not permit this project.

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#EI-19011

Correspondence Information

Docket #:	FD 30186 0	Date Received:	11/08/2012
Name of Sender:	Susan Schwab	Date of Letter:	11/08/2012
Group:			

Submitter's Comments

I am greatly concerned about the added congestion and pollution (cars backed up idling waiting for train tracks to clear) that the increased coal train traffic would cause. My community is bisected with train tracks—there is no other way to access the interstate to the hospital. I'm concerned about the delays emergency responders would face. There is also the added noise pollution of trains blowing whistles through my small town. I live six blocks from the tracks, but when the whistle blows, it sounds like the train is literally in my back yard. I'm also concerned about the loss of agricultural land and way of life, and the loss of business along the tracks in communities all along the route. If one can't get to the business, the business goes OUT of business. The coal industry and railroad are the only entities truly benefiting from this endeavor. Ad of course, there's the climate concern. All around, it's just a BAD idea.

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#EI-19012

Correspondence Information

Docket #:	FD 30186 0	Date Received:	11/08/2012
Name of Sender:	Peter Goodman	Date of Letter:	11/08/2012
Group:			

Submitter's Comments

Approval of the Tongue River railroad will have a major impact on our way of life, the health of our communities, and our economy. We don't want more dirty coal trains clogging up our rail lines, disrupting our communities, and displacing the hauling of Montana's agricultural commodities.

The environmental analysis should include a full-blown environmental impact statement that comprehensively considers the environmental and economic impacts this line will have on climate change, agricultural operations, communities, and rail transport.

It is imperative that you consider the climate change impacts of digging, hauling, and burning 1.3 billion tons of coal. The analysis must consider the possibility that a new rail line could lead to the digging, hauling and burning of other coal resources in the area, contributing even more than the projected 2.6 billion tons of greenhouse gas emissions that will result from the development of the Otter Creek tracts alone.

Peter Goodman _____

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#EI-19013

Correspondence Information

Docket #:	FD 30186 0	Date Received:	11/08/2012
Name of Sender:	Carol Makela	Date of Letter:	11/08/2012
Group:			

Submitter's Comments

It is imperative that you consider the climate change impacts of digging, hauling, and burning 1.3 billion tons of coal. The analysis must consider the possibility that a new rail line could lead to the digging, hauling and burning of other coal resources in the area, contributing even more than the projected 2.6 billion tons of greenhouse gas emissions that will result from the development of the Otter Creek tracts alone. I also urge you to consider the countless lives of animals and plants that will be lost as a direct result of strip mining and laying new tracks through their habitat.

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#EI-19014

Correspondence Information

Docket #:	FD 30186 0	Date Received:	11/08/2012
Name of Sender:	Arona K Henderson MD	Date of Letter:	11/08/2012
Group:			

Submitter's Comments

Approval of the Tongue River railroad will have a major impact on our way of life, the health of our communities, and our economy. We don't want more dirty coal trains clogging up our rail lines, disrupting our communities, and displacing the hauling of Montana's agricultural commodities.

The environmental analysis should include a full-blown environmental impact statement that comprehensively considers the environmental and economic impacts this line will have on climate change, agricultural operations, communities, and rail transport.

It is imperative that you consider the climate change impacts of digging, hauling, and burning 1.3 billion tons of coal. The analysis must consider the possibility that a new rail line could lead to the digging, hauling and burning of other coal resources in the area, contributing even more than the projected 2.6 billion tons of greenhouse gas emissions that will result from the development of the Otter Creek tracts alone.

Arguments against Coal Export Terminal at Cherry Point and Railway's Custer Spur Rail Expansion

If Peabody Coal and SSA Marine (49% owned by Goldman Sachs) put North America's largest coal export terminal at Cherry Point, they will get huge profits, China will get cheap coal, and people living in communities surrounding the Gateway Pacific terminal, GPT, will get pollution in their air, land and water.

The GPT threatens our health, clean air, and water.

If the GPT is built, each year over 48 million tons of coal would be brought on trains to Cherry Point, dumped on 80 feet tall open storage piles, loaded onto ships and sent to China. According to the rail operator, BNSF, every single coal car can lose as much as 500 pounds of coal dust en route. A 2001 Canadian study of coal dust emissions at the Westshore Terminal near Tsawassen B.C., estimated that the Westshore Terminal emits roughly 1.5 million lbs. of coal dust a year. The proposed Cherry Point Terminal would be more than twice the size of Westshore with potentially twice the coal dust problem.

Coal dust escaping from trains and terminal storage piles and diesel exhaust from train engines and cargo ships threaten our health because they contain toxic substances such as lead, mercury, arsenic, benzene, and formaldehyde. These can cause serious health problems including cancer, asthma, heart attacks, lung and breathing problems, birth defects and infant deaths. 180 Whatcom County doctors say there is no safe level of exposure to these substances.

The prevailing winds at Cherry Point do not blow out to sea. The prevailing winds at Cherry Point blow toward the surrounding communities. Every year the wind would carry millions of pounds of toxic coal dust onto the neighborhoods, homes, farms, cars, patio furniture, and vegetable gardens of people living in Whatcom County.

Terminal cities across North America are experiencing problems with coal dust coating their communities:

Even though the prevailing winds blow out to sea at the Westshore coal terminal and even though it is only half as big as the proposed GPT, residents in Point Roberts, WA report coal dust blackens their homes, vehicles, patio furniture and boats. The Point Roberts marina manager reports the coal dust is a "constant problem" blackening boats and has resulted in lost business.

The Ridley coal terminal, near Port Edward, B.C., ships only 9 tons of coal a year but photos show huge coal-dust clouds rising from the storage piles and residents report black coal dust coats their property. In response to homeowner complaints, the Ridley terminal now sends out a contractor "free of charge" to power wash the coal dust off residents' homes.

Residents in Seward Alaska have sued the coal terminal because coal dust blowing off the coal storage piles coats and damages their fishing boats, their neighborhoods and their scenic harbor. The state of Alaska has already given a \$220,000 fine to the railroad that brings coal to the Seward terminal for failing to control coal dust coming off the trains.

In Newport News, Virginia, despite the "advanced" water sprinkling systems and coal conveyer belts used at the Dominion 1.7 million ton coal shipping terminal, residents say coal dust coats their homes and, if they open the windows, coal dust coats the inside too. In the community near the coal terminal, the asthma rate is twice that for the rest of Virginia.

The GPT threatens the beauty and natural resources upon which our communities are built.

The GPT threatens the Cherry Point Aquatic Reserve, Birch Bay beaches, Whatcom County's recreational fishing, commercial fishing, and tourism industry. Flooding tides flow from Cherry Point, through the aquatic reserve toward Point

Whitehorn and then into and around Birch Bay. The flooding tides carrying coal dust and cargo ship ballast water would damage eel grass, herring, salmon, crabs, clams and other wildlife. If the GPT is built, the daily high tides would deposit black coal dust on Birch Bay beaches.

When people buy a home or locate their business they look for safe, healthy neighborhoods with good schools, clean environments, and thriving communities. People do not want to move into dirty neighborhoods with noise, pollution, traffic and major industry that negatively impact the single largest investment they are ever likely to make.

As proposed the Gateway Pacific Terminal at Cherry Point would create the largest coal export facility in North America. Each year 450 ships would travel through the straits enroute to Asia. A third of the ships would be Capesize vessels which are: An ocean-going cargo vessel that is physically too large to fit through the locks of either the Panama or Suez Canals and therefore must voyage via Cape Horn at the southernmost tip of South America to get to or from the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, or the Cape of Good Hope at the southernmost tip of South Africa to get to and from the Indian and Atlantic Oceans. Capesize vessels generally serve deep-water terminals handling raw materials, such as iron ore and coal.

The rest of the vessels would be Panamax: ocean-going cargo vessels of the maximum size possible to pass through the locks of the Panama Canal, which are 1000 ft. long by 110 ft. wide and 85ft deep. These vessels are typically of 50,000 to 80,000 dwt, 965ft (290m) in length; 106ft. (32.3m) beam; and 39.5ft (12.04m) draft.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has determined the Gateway Pacific Terminal (GPT) and Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railway's Custer Spur Rail Expansion projects are interrelated and may have significant individual and/or cumulative impacts on the human environment. An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 and the Washington State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA).

Preparation of the EIS will support the Corps' eventual decision to either issue, issue with modification or deny DA permits for the proposed actions. The EIS will assess the potential social, economic, and environmental impacts of the projects and is intended to be sufficient in scope to address Federal, State, and local requirements, environmental and socio-economic issues concerning the proposed action, and permit reviews.

Sierra Club Scrapbook

September 28, 2012

Oregon Gives the Stop Signal to Big Coal That was the message the Portland City Council, the Metro, and the city of The Dalles sent Big Coal last week after they all approved resolutions opposing coal exports through the Pacific Northwest without a full area-wide environmental review conducted by the Army Corps of Engineers.

Portland's council vote was just the latest example in a string of cities and municipalities demanding environmental reviews and putting the interests of communities and public health before Big Coal profits. Tens of thousands of residents, 400 business leaders, 570 healthcare professionals, 200 faith leaders, and more than 160 public officials, including Oregon Governor Kitzhaber, have written letters, submitted comments, and rallied for a full review.

"There are so many better sources of energy available," says Howard Shapiro, Beyond Coal campaign volunteer in Portland, who lives less than a mile from the train tracks that coal trains would use. The idea that we're working hard to get off coal and then some guys come here who want to send coal through the Columbia River Gorge in open trains is crazy. Environmentally it's a disaster. And I'm particularly concerned by coal train derailments and that these trains would use the same tracks as passenger trains."

Big Coal wants to connect its coal mining operations in Wyoming with Asian markets by building export terminals at such places as Coos Bay, Oregon, and Longview, Port Westward, and Cherry Point, Washington. Peabody in particular wants to export 48 million tons through Cherry Point each year. Coal companies want to send 32 coal trains a day through Portland, reports The Oregonian.

It's not just environmentalists who want to stop Big Coal in its tracks. The medical and public health communities, small business owners, educators, and all sorts of political figures and municipalities have opposed the idea.

"Will you please study the impact of the thousands of coal trains going from their points of origin through the regions of Bellingham and Blaine and the other areas that the rail lines pass through in this area to the storage and shipping facility planned at Cherry Point.

My family and I are living in dread of the proposed coal terminal construction and transfer of freight trains of coal to the site for storage before shipping. The only benefit I see from this egregious act is the profit that the sponsoring and underwriting massive corporations will make.

At the expense of the health of all the people residing along the rail lines or within air current reach of the lines, residing near the terminal with its mounds of coal piled high in the air blowing dust in over the adjacent land, if this project goes forward undeterred by environmental and common sense studies, I foresee a disaster of immeasurable consequences.

Other regions in Canada that had similar projects have had enormous regrets.

Impacts are wide ranging:

Health of individuals as coal dust gets into the lungs with each breath; vulnerable are the already ill, babies, children, those with asthma or other COPD, and the rest of the population Wildlife affected similarly Vegetation affected Sea life affected

Property values decline even further than has already occurred in this current recession Interminable trains going by loaded with coal spewing the dust into the air Lines of cars at the railway crossings burning gasoline with fumes rising into the air as they wait for the innumerable box cars to roll by. The stored coal and vessels shipping the coal will kill off the Orca whales. The beautiful forests will suffer; the trees will be exposed to the noxious fumes. Trees were not meant to live in a coal laden atmosphere. Coal is a dirty fuel. It will be shipped away to countries that will burn it and use it and the environmental impact of it then becomes more pronounced worldwide. The promised jobs for the region will not materialize. People will be brought in from elsewhere to work at low wages. This project must be stopped
The whole reason for this is in a word PROFIT to those who are already rolling in billions of PROFIT.
Thank you for reading this. My only hope is that the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers will find this project a scheming, shameful, immoral, reprehensible, despicable, and environmentally dangerous one and veto it.
Arona K Henderson retired MD

Surface Transportation Board

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#EI-19015

Correspondence Information

Docket #:	FD 30186 0	Date Received:	11/08/2012
Name of Sender:	Sara Brooke Benjamin	Date of Letter:	11/08/2012
Group:			

Submitter's Comments

The environmental analysis should include a full-blown environmental impact statement that comprehensively considers the environmental and economic impacts this line will have on climate change, agricultural operations, communities, and rail transport.

It is imperative that you consider the climate change impacts of digging, hauling, and burning 1.3 billion tons of coal. The analysis must consider the possibility that a new rail line could lead to the digging, hauling and burning of other coal resources in the area, contributing even more than the projected 2.6 billion tons of greenhouse gas emissions that will result from the development of the Otter Creek tracts alone.

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#EI-19016

Correspondence Information

Docket #:	FD 30186 0	Date Received:	11/09/2012
Name of Sender:	Leaf Schumann	Date of Letter:	11/09/2012
Group:			

Submitter's Comments

While the need to create jobs in our economy is understandable, I strongly oppose the mining, transporting and shipping of our coal resources to the west coast and then to Asia. There are many reasons for this, but paramount among them is the level of disruption it will bring to our rural community. Numerous school buses, aid cares, 911 responders, and fire trucks pass countless train crossings in our rural county. A quick response means everything. Unless coal producers/shippers are willing to take responsibility for the loss of life and property OR are willing to fully fund mitigation required (something with no precedent) the impact will be insurmountably negative.

Of course the risk of ocean spills, bilge dumps, diesel and coal dust with accompanying heavy metals, noise at each of the dozens of crossings, loss of revenue and jobs that might otherwise result from attempts to develop Bellingham Bay, etc. are to be considered as well.

Surface Transportation Board

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#EI-19017

Correspondence Information

Docket #:	FD 30186 0	Date Received:	11/10/2012
Name of Sender:	Lydia Garvey	Date of Letter:	11/10/2012
Group:			

Submitter's Comments

I strongly urge you to Nix coal (for China!) railroad through spectacular, pristine, World Heritage Tongue River Valley! Not only will it destroy this area but greatly add to greenhouse gases & pollute water/air. Needs a Full EIS!

I strongly urge you to- Do your job- Protect Our Public lands, waters, livelihoods, air, wildlife & health! You work for citizens, Not industry!

Your attention to this most urgent matter would be much appreciated by all present & future generations of all species.

Thank you
Lydia Garvey
Public Health Nurse

Surface Transportation Board

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#EI-19018

Correspondence Information

Docket #:	FD 30186 0	Date Received:	11/11/2012
Name of Sender:	Russell Salisbury	Date of Letter:	11/11/2012
Group:			

Submitter's Comments

We don't want more dirty coal trains clogging up our rail lines, disrupting our communities, and displacing the hauling of Montana's agricultural commodities.

The environmental analysis should include a full-blown environmental impact statement that comprehensively considers the environmental and economic impacts this line will have on climate change, agricultural operations, communities, and rail transport. Most importantly, it is imperative that you consider the climate change impacts of digging, hauling, and burning 1.3 billion tons of coal. The analysis must consider the possibility that a new rail line could lead to the digging, hauling and burning of other coal resources in the area, contributing even more than the projected 2.6 billion tons of greenhouse gas emissions that will result from the development of the Otter Creek tracts alone.

Surface Transportation Board

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#EI-19019

Correspondence Information

Docket #:	FD 30186 0	Date Received:	11/12/2012
Name of Sender:	Doug Soehren	Date of Letter:	11/12/2012
Group:	Friends of the Bitterroot		

Submitter's Comments

The environmental analysis should include a full-blown environmental impact statement that comprehensively considers the environmental and economic impacts this line will have on climate change, agricultural operations, Montana, Idaho, Washington and Oregon communities, and rail transport.

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#EI-19020

Correspondence Information

Docket #:	FD 30186 0	Date Received:	11/12/2012
Name of Sender:	Yellowbeard	Date of Letter:	11/12/2012
Group:	Northern Cheyenne Nation		

Submitter's Comments

The Tongue River Valley is at stake...the Valley of the Chiefs. Archeological sites abound...springs, wildlife, water diversity, native plants/food, berries, bugs, animals, etc. The rich Northern Cheyenne culture will be impacted. The great Cheyenne Nation...the Morningstar People have much to give, while our communities are not prepared and do not have infrastructure in place...no irrigation systems, wind/solar power, cogen, etc., no business...I am against this railroad and projected coal mine, which I think will not be constructed. its a losing business and is not a solution to pollution; it is an end of pipe solution to more pollution. Technological advancements in enery development overshadow Fischer Tropsch gasification process. We can make energy from other sustainable sources and \$100 of millions from other developments.

Surface Transportation Board

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#EI-19021

Correspondence Information

Docket #:	FD 30186 0	Date Received:	11/12/2012
Name of Sender:	Thomas Kilmer	Date of Letter:	11/12/2012
Group:			

Submitter's Comments

The Tongue River Valley is one of my favorite places in Montana. This pristine, isolated agricultural valley has provided a sustainable way of life for thousands of years. The Native Americans before us and now ranchers and farmers. This beautiful, thriving valley is an important piece of Montana just as it is. Construction of the Tongue River Railroad would destroy the Tongue River Valley. Farms and Ranches would be sundered. Ground water would be polluted. The clear, clean air would be fouled.

Outside of the Tongue River Valley dirty coal trains coming out of the mines would clog rail lines. The shipment of sustainable agriculture products from Montana would be displaced. Communities big and small would be impacted by coal dust, noise and diesel fumes. Rail crossings would be blocked for extended periods of time, slowing the movement of school busses and emergency vehicles.

World wide the impact of digging, hauling and burning all that coal transported by the railroad would contribute horribly to global warming.

You must do a complete Environmental Impact Statement that considers Global Warming and the economic impacts this railroad will have on the sustainable agriculture of the Tongue River Valley.

Please do non approve this railroad.

thanks.

Tom Kilmer. Native of Montana. I live in Helena but have a deep appreciation for the beauty of the Tongue River Valley and the people who live and work on it's farms and ranches.

Surface Transportation Board

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#EI-19022

Correspondence Information

Docket #:	FD 30186 0	Date Received:	11/12/2012
Name of Sender:	John Werner	Date of Letter:	11/12/2012
Group:			

Submitter's Comments

Mr. Blodgett:Re: the Tongue River Railroad in Montana being proposed to haul coal out of the Otter Creek area to Miles City, I strongly urge you to insist on a full environmental impact statement and one that includes the effects of climate change. It is becoming increasingly evident that global climate change is real, that it is impacting cities and communities across the globe and that we cannot continue to ignore its causes and effects. To continue burning coal, be it in Montana or China, makes no sense in the face of an increasing number of alternative energy sources. Let's not burden our children and future generations with problems that could have been avoided by common sense solutions. Montana doesn't need the coal, the US doesn't need the coal, the only purpose in this undertaking is short-term financial gain - at the long-term expense of all of us.

Thank you for your consideration.

John Werner

Surface Transportation Board

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#EI-19023

Correspondence Information

Docket #:	FD 30186 0	Date Received:	11/13/2012
Name of Sender:	Michael L. Sandiland	Date of Letter:	11/13/2012
Group:			

Submitter's Comments

The Tongue River Rail line in south east Montana must be REFUSED simple based upon irrefutable facts regarding increased carbon emissions adding to global warming. It matters not where the coal is burned it is warming the planet.

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#EI-19024

Correspondence Information

Docket #:	FD 30186 0	Date Received:	11/13/2012
Name of Sender:	Eric Grimsrud	Date of Letter:	11/13/2012
Group:			

Submitter's Comments

Due to AGW, the world simply can not tolerate the combustion of its vast reserves of coal. There is simply too much coal left to burn. We can hardly tolerate use of the clean forms of fossil fuels, gas and oil. So we must use only the latter two while we switch over to the alternative source of energy. If we develop these "feeds" of coal and tar sands oil (Keystone pipeline) we will use it for many years, unfortunately. Please don't go in that direction. Thank you and see my web site, ericgrimsrud.com for more.



EI-19025

SPOKANE CITY COUNCIL
808 W. Spokane Falls Blvd.
Spokane, WA 99201-3335
(509) 625-6255

Ben Stuckart
Council President

November 2, 2012

Ken Blodgett
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20423-0001

Attention: Environmental Filing, Docket No. FD 30186

Dear Sir:

As the Surface Transportation Board begins to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement on a proposed new permit for the Tongue River Railroad company in Montana, the City of Spokane calls on the Surface Transportation Board to include in its analysis of impacts the significant increase in coal trains traveling in and out of Spokane as a result of this new rail line.

The proposed railroad which was originally conceived to carry Montana coal to Midwestern utilities is now directed toward markets on the Pacific Rim. The proposed Otter Creek mine in Southeastern Montana would initially produce 22 million tons per year, with plans to reach full production of 40-45 million tons per year. The configuration of the rail system in the region is such that all of that coal, and any additional mines in that region that might be opened up as a result of the rail spur would have to travel through Spokane on its way to ports.

The Otter Creek Mine alone would add more than 15 trains per day to the load of traffic going through Spokane¹. It would produce a larger tonnage than all of the agricultural commodities shipped out of our region².

The City Council of Spokane unanimously adopted a resolution identifying its direct interests in coal export terminals west of here in Washington and Oregon. I have included a copy of the resolution with this letter.

The Surface Transportation Board is in a unique position to review the Tongue River Railroad and consider the wider impacts on the rail system of the region of coal exports from the Powder River Basin via ports in the Pacific Northwest. In addition to the coal trains that might originate on the Tongue River Railroad, the city of Sheridan, Wyoming, has produced a study that anticipates an additional 30 (plus) coal trains a day coming

¹ Whiteside, Terry, and Gerald Fauth, Heavy Traffic Ahead, Figure 5, p. 10.

² Ibid. Figure 21, p. 42.

out of coal fields in the upper Tongue River drainage (Spring Creek, Youngs Creek, Decker) and the northern Powder River Basin in Gillette.¹

The volume of coal traffic from the proposed Tongue River Railroad along with other mines in the Powder River Basin represents an exponential increase in train traffic through the Pacific Northwest², stressing a system that in many areas is already near or at capacity according to the Washington Dept. of Transportation, and noted as well in "Heavy Traffic Ahead," a report prepared for the Western Organization of Resource Councils by Terry Whiteside and Gerald Fauth.

Substantial increases in coal trains through Spokane from the Tongue River Railroad would present serious issues and problems. These include inadequate infrastructure, public safety and traffic delays, impacts on businesses near the rail lines, the need for costly new infrastructure, air quality problems due to diesel particulate emissions and coal dust, and other concerns including property values and noise.

The City of Spokane raises the following concerns to be looked at in the environmental review of this proposed rail line:

Rail line capacity and impacts

Traffic congestion and Public Safety

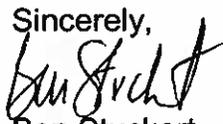
Infrastructure needs

Noise pollution

Air Pollution

Business impacts

Property values

Sincerely,

Ben Stuckart

¹ The Sheridan Press, "Railroad reroute: Study: Number of trains traveling through Sheridan each day could reach 66 by 2022," Oct. 16, 2012.

² Ibid, Figure 4, p. 7.



Agenda Sheet for City Council Meeting of:

06/18/2012

Date Rec'd	6/6/2012
Clerk's File #	RES 2012-0052
Renews #	
Cross Ref #	
Project #	
Bid #	
Requisition #	

Submitting Dept	CITY COUNCIL
Contact Name/Phone	BEN STUCKART 625.6258
Contact E-Mail	BSTUCKART@SPOKANECITY.ORG
Agenda Item Type	Resolutions
Agenda Item Name	0320 COAL RESOLUTION

Agenda Wording

A resolution expressing interest regarding potential impacts of increased rail traffic passing through the City of Spokane resulting from proposed terminal projects,

Summary (Background)

There have been recent discussions of the development of proposed terminal projects on the west coast of the United States, including the west coast of Washington State, for the overseas shipment of coal. The coal would be transported to the terminals by train traveling through communities, including Spokane. There are potential impacts of increased rail traffic passing through the City of Spokane resulting from proposed terminal projects.

Fiscal Impact	Budget Account
Select \$	#

Approvals		Council Notifications	
Dept Head	WESTFALL, JENNIFER	Study Session	
Division Director		Other	
Finance	LESESNE, MICHELE	Distribution List	
Legal	PICCOLO, MIKE		
For the Mayor	FEIST, MARLENE		
Additional Approvals			
Purchasing			

Resolution No. 2012-0052

A resolution expressing interest regarding potential impacts of increased rail traffic passing through the City of Spokane resulting from proposed terminal projects, and requesting that the principal agencies reviewing the Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) for said projects, study and identify the impacts to the City of Spokane, and that at least one of the EIS Scoping hearings be held in Spokane.

WHEREAS Spokane, as the major rail crossroads of the Inland Northwest, would bear a significant increase in the number of coal trains passing through the City of Spokane; and

WHEREAS, the Council is reviewing the potential impacts on our community's health, air quality, safety and businesses from noise pollution, coal dust and other particulates from additional coal trains; and

WHEREAS, diesel exhaust and coal dust contain substances proven to increase the risk of cancer, lung disease, and worsened asthma from additional coal trains; and

WHEREAS, thousands of Spokane City residents live or work within ¼ mile of the rail corridor which is the source of concentrated mobile-source air toxins produced by diesel emissions; and

WHEREAS, a significant increase in coal train traffic may compromise the response time of emergency responders, and may delay general commerce, commuters, and other vehicular traffic.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of Spokane as follows:

- 1) We ask that the potential impacts to Spokane's public health, safety, economy, traffic, and air quality be studied by the agencies conducting the environmental review and request that Spokane be included in any EIS hearing schedule pertaining to any project in the Northwest that may cause significant increases in associated rail traffic traveling via Spokane; and
- 2) We urge the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Department of Ecology, and Whatcom City Council to hold at least one of the environmental impact statement scoping hearings in Spokane and to conduct thorough studies which identify and measure the major impacts to Spokane that would result from a significant increase in coal train traffic.

ADOPTED by the City Council _____, 2012.

City Clerk

Approved as to form:

Assistant City Attorney

From: James T. Grant
15005 W Silver Lake Road
Medical Lkae, WA., 99022-9555

To: Ken Blodgett
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street S.W.
Washington, D.C., 20423-0001

Re: Environmental Filing Docket No. FD30186

1. Incredibly more than any profit realized (should this proposal be approved) will be the damage to the health of the Tongue River Valley community and its way of life.
2. Please require a complete and comprehensive environmental impact annalysis that such a proposal would have for scores of years to come, not just on the pristine Tongue River Valley, but on all communities along the transport lines.
3. This is not just a Tongue River Valley issue. Chinese citizens are protesting the building of coal fired plants and being tear gassed, beaten and jailed for protesting.
4. If we are going to reduce our carbon foot print in our nation, we need people like yourself standing up and reminding those involved that profit alone does not define our democratic capitalism.

Sincerely,


James T. Grant

#E1-19027
J



Fw: Tongue River Railroad
Brian O'Boyle to: Vicki Rutson

11/14/2012 11:57 AM

From: Brian O'Boyle/STB
To: Vicki Rutson/STB@STB

From: "Bruce MacIntyre" <Bruce@billingschamber.com>
To: <Brian.OBoyle@stb.dot.gov>
Date: 11/14/2012 11:19 AM
Subject: Tongue River Railroad

Brian,

Would you please add the attached to the testimony received a for the Tongue River Railroad.

Thanks,

Bruce

Bruce MacIntyre
Director, Business Advocacy & Government Affairs
Billings Chamber of Commerce/Convention & Visitors Bureau
815 So. 27th Street/P.O. Box 31177
Billings, MT 59107
Phone: 406-869-3723
Fax: 406-245-7333
bruce@billingschamber.com
www.billingschamber.com

**5-Star Accreditation in 2010, places the
Billings Chamber/CVB in the top 1% of all U.S. Chambers.**



Tongue River railroad.docx

Billings Chamber/CVB Supports Tongue River Railroad Project

November 13, 2012—A key to energy development in Montana is the ability to move natural resources from area of development to the ultimate market. For the past 30 years the Tongue River Railroad project (which would bring coal from the Otter Creek Mine to market) has been studied, dissected and discussed, and roadblocks have been thrown in front of the progress at every step of the way. This week the Federal Surface Transportation Board is meeting throughout eastern Montana to hear concerns by environmental groups bent on stopping this short 80 mile rail spur.

On behalf of our 1,170 members and their employees who number over 44,000, the Billings Chamber of Commerce/Convention & Visitors Bureau encourages the forward progress of this spur without more environmental studies.

Responsible energy exploration and development on public and private lands is crucial to resolving our nation's energy crisis and building Montana's economy. We recognize the significance of coal production to the state economy and financial assistance it affords local communities throughout Montana. The responsible and timely development of new coal mines will provide a much needed economic boost to Montana. We therefore support efforts that will enable new coal production to occur, including the development of railroad infrastructure and securing access to federal and state-owned coal reserves.

The economic impact to Eastern Montana in general and the Billings area specifically is enormous and we need to facilitate, not hinder this process. A June 2012 University of Montana study of the potential of Otter Creek, shows the economic impact to Montana would be \$200 million yearly. The mine would generate \$92 million in state and local taxes, create hundreds of jobs locally and across the state, and increase the state's population by nearly 3,000 people (Billings Gazette http://billingsgazette.com/news/state-and-regional/montana/um-report-says-otter-creek-coal-mine-would-bring-m/article_426fb7a0-bf29-568c-bda3-c21de405f4fb.html).

Proposed Tongue River Map: http://billingsgazette.com/news/state-and-regional/montana/tongue-river-railroad-map/image_015b40b2-b8d9-58cd-8bf6-faf4b2a25623.html

Article form Billings Gazette 11/12/12: http://billingsgazette.com/news/state-and-regional/montana/montana-coal-railroad-line-faces-federal-review/article_a7dcd729-6394-5020-b7b8-f0bf1640dfd8.html

Surface Transportation Board

Incoming Correspondence Record



#EI-19029

Correspondence Information

Docket #:	FD 30186 0	Date Received:	11/13/2012
Name of Sender:	Steve Thompson	Date of Letter:	11/13/2012
Group:			

Submitter's Comments

I have grave concerns about the proposed Tongue River Railroad and the many negative impacts that it will directly and indirectly entail. Of particular concern is the question of eminent domain. Private land should be condemned by the government on behalf of large corporations only if the public good that will result from condemnation outweighs the negative impacts to the landowner. The TRR fails that test of public benefit because it will facilitate the export of coal, the world's dirtiest source of climate changing greenhouse gases, to Asian markets. Please complete a comprehensive EIS to evaluate the social, environmental and economic impacts this line will have on climate change, agricultural operations, communities, and rail transport. It is critical that you consider the climate change impacts of digging, hauling, and burning 1.3 billion tons of coal. The analysis must consider the possibility that a new rail line could lead to the digging, hauling and burning of other coal resources in the area, contributing even more than the projected 2.6 billion tons of greenhouse gas emissions that will result from the development of the Otter Creek tracts alone. Thank you for addressing these concerns in your environmental analysis and please keep me informed about this case.

Surface Transportation Board

Incoming Correspondence Record



#EI-19030

Correspondence Information

Docket #:	FD 30186 0	Date Received:	11/14/2012
Name of Sender:	Tim Erickson	Date of Letter:	11/14/2012
Group:			

Submitter's Comments

Dear Mr. Blodgett:

I support the Tongue River Railroad Company's application to construct a new rail line, and request a fair and timely review. The Tongue River Railroad and the development of the Otter Creek mine will provide great economic value to the state of Montana and a tremendous boost to Eastern Montana's economy. The railroad project would positively affect Montana by creating much needed family-wage jobs and increasing local and state tax revenue. Please ensure compliance with Montana's high environmental standards, but avoid unnecessary delays.

Sincerely,

Tim Erickson