

Meeting 1-6.17.15

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ONLINE PUBLIC MEETING
FOR THE
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
FOR THE
PROPOSED TONGUE RIVER RAILROAD

JUNE 17, 2015
12:05 P.M. EST
ONLINE MEETING

Meeting 1-6.17.15

1 WEDNESDAY, JUNE 17, 2015

2 12:05 P.M. ET

3 ONLINE MEETING

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5 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Okay, folks, we'll go ahead
6 and get started.

7 My name is Jennifer Piggott, and I will be
8 facilitator and host for today's online meeting.

9 Welcome to the online meeting for the Tongue River
10 Railroad project. All of your lines are muted, and we
11 will unmute individual lines in the order in which you
12 signed up to speak today.

13 Our panel members today are Danielle Gosselin,
14 who's an attorney advisor with the Surface
15 Transportation Board; Alan Summerville, who is a project
16 manager with ICF International, a third-party contractor
17 helping the Surface Transportation Board with the
18 environmental document; and then again, my name is
19 Jennifer Piggott, and I'm your facilitator.

20 Today, we're going to do just some brief
21 introductions, and then we're going to go through the
22 environmental review process. Then we will review some
23 oral comment ground rules, at which point we'll move
24 into the public comment portion, and this session will
25 adjourn at 3:00 p.m. Eastern time.

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1 So with that, I'd like to introduce
2 Danielle Gosselin, from the Office of Environmental
3 Analysis with the Surface Transportation Board.

4 Danielle?

5 DANIELLE GOSSELIN: Good afternoon. Or good
6 morning for many of you, and thank you for attending
7 today's online public comment meeting on the Draft
8 Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed
9 construction and operation of the Tongue River Railroad.

10 My name is Danielle Gosselin, from the
11 Surface Transportation Board, Office of Environmental
12 Analysis.

13 The Surface Transportation Board is the
14 federal agency responsible for the economic regulation
15 of interstate surface transportation within the
16 United States and for granting authority for the
17 construction and operation of new rail lines and
18 associated facilities.

19 The board's mission is to ensure that
20 competitive, efficient, and safe transportation services
21 are provided to meet the needs of shippers, receivers,
22 and consumers. In all of its decisions, the board is
23 committed to advancing the national transportation
24 policy goals established by the Congress.

25 The Office of Environmental Analysis, or OEA, 3

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1 is responsible for ensuring that the board is in
2 compliance with the requirements of the National
3 Environmental Policy Act, or NEPA. The underlying
4 purpose of NEPA is to provide the decision-makers, in
5 this case the board members, with information that
6 promotes informed decision-making. OEA fulfills its
7 responsibility through the independent environmental
8 review of railroad actions, which require the board's
9 approval.

10 On October 16th, 2012, the Tongue River
11 Railroad Company filed an application with the board to
12 construct and operate a rail line from Miles City,
13 Montana, to endpoints near Ashland, Montana.

14 On December 17th, 2012, the Tongue River
15 Railroad Company filed a supplemental application in
16 which it identified its preferred routing for the
17 proposed line as the Colstrip alternative, between
18 Colstrip and the Ashland area.

19 The Surface Transportation Board is the lead
20 agency responsible for preparing the Draft EIS. Four
21 cooperating agencies worked with the board in preparing
22 the Draft EIS: The Bureau of Land Management, the
23 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Department of
24 Agriculture, and Montana state agencies. These
25 cooperating agencies have decision-making authority

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1 independent of the board and are agencies from which the
2 Tongue River Railroad Company would obtain separate
3 approvals or permits prior to construction.

4 The purpose of today's meeting is for the
5 board to receive oral comments on the Draft EIS from
6 members of the public who are unable to attend public
7 meetings in the project area.

8 The Draft EIS was served and made available
9 for public review and comment on April 17th and reflects
10 OEA's analysis of the potential environmental impacts
11 that could result from the construction and operation of
12 the proposed rail line.

13 Public involvement is an important component
14 in the environmental review process. Our hope is that
15 the comments you provide will help ensure that our
16 office fully addresses the potential environmental
17 impacts that could result from this project, as well as
18 appropriate mitigation measures.

19 The Draft EIS public comment period will last
20 until August 24th, 2015. After the public comment
21 period has come to a close, OEA will consider all
22 comments received and address each comment in the
23 Final EIS, which will present our final conclusions and
24 recommendations for mitigating possible environmental
25 effects.

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1 Issuing the Final EIS will complete the
2 board's environmental review process. The board members
3 will then make the final decision on the proposed rail
4 line construction. In making that decision, the board
5 members will consider the entire environmental record,
6 including all public comments, the Draft EIS, the
7 Final EIS, and OEA's final recommended environmental
8 mitigation. No project-related construction may begin
9 until the board's final decision has been issued and has
10 become effective.

11 Those who have registered to speak during this
12 meeting, which will be recorded by a court reporter
13 attending the meeting, will be called upon to speak in
14 the order in which they're registered.

15 Written comments may also be mailed to the
16 board or submitted electronically on the project Web
17 site, tonguerivereis.com. All oral and written comments
18 will be given equal weight and consideration. In
19 preparing the comments, we encourage you to be as
20 detailed as possible regarding the content of the
21 Draft EIS.

22 I will conclude my remarks now and turn the
23 meeting over to Alan Summerville, who will provide a
24 little more information on the environmental review
25 process.

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1 Alan?

2 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Alan, this is
3 Jennifer Piggott. We're having a little trouble hearing
4 you.

5 Can you please speak up?

6 ALAN SUMMERVILLE: -- comments received
7 through the scoping process, the board published a
8 notice of the Final Scope of Study for the EIS --

9 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Alan, this is
10 Jennifer Piggott. Can you go ahead and start over? We
11 had some trouble hearing the start of your comments.

12 ALAN SUMMERVILLE: Oh, okay. Sure.

13 Good morning. To initiate the scoping process
14 for this environmental review, OEA issued notification
15 of its intent to prepare an EIS to the public; elected
16 officials; federal, state, and local agencies; tribal
17 organizations; and other potentially interested
18 organizations. OEA issued a Draft Scope of Study and
19 held agency and public meetings to obtain comments on
20 the topics that the EIS should analyze and possible
21 alternatives to the Tongue River Railroad Corporation's
22 proposed alignment. Interested agencies and persons
23 were invited to participate in the scoping phase by
24 reviewing the Draft Scope of Study, submitting comments
25 in writing, and attending scoping meetings. After

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1 considering the comments received through the scoping
2 process, the board published a notice of the Final Scope
3 of Study for the EIS on March 22nd, 2013.

4 Throughout the development of the Draft EIS,
5 OEA met in person and through teleconferences with
6 federal, state, and local agencies, as well as tribes.

7 OEA prepared the Draft EIS by analyzing the
8 potential environmental impacts of the proposed
9 Tongue River Railroad and the reasonable alternatives,
10 including the "No-Action" alternative. The Draft EIS
11 also addresses the impacts of the trains traveling to
12 destinations outside the project area, which are also
13 referred to as "downline impacts."

14 Any of the build alternatives could have minor
15 to highly adverse impacts on the following resources:
16 Transportation, greenhouse gases and climate change,
17 noise, biological, water, visual, cultural, and
18 historical and land resources, as well as geology and
19 soils, socioeconomics, and environmental justice. All
20 other resources would experience negligible impacts.

21 The Draft EIS also includes OEA's preliminary
22 recommendations for environmental mitigation. These
23 mitigation measures will be considered by the board as
24 potential conditions if the board decides to grant
25 Tongue River Railroad authority to construct and operate 8

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1 the rail line.

2 The Draft EIS was distributed and made
3 available on April 17th to interested members of the
4 public; parties of record; elected officials; tribes;
5 and appropriate federal, state, and local officials.
6 OEA provided extensive notification through various
7 means to the project area and downline communities.

8 As Danielle stated, the Final EIS will
9 consider and respond to all comments received on the
10 Draft EIS and will include any appropriate changes and
11 recommendations for additional mitigation measures. It
12 will also identify OEA's preferred alternative.

13 Completion of the Final EIS will be announced
14 to the public in the Notice of Availability published in
15 the Federal Register and by notification to interested
16 parties.

17 At this time, I would like to hand the meeting
18 back over to our facilitator, Jennifer Piggott, who will
19 go over some ground rules, and then we can begin to hear
20 public comments.

21 Thank you.

22 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Great. Thanks, Alan.

23 We would now like to begin the oral comment
24 portion of today's meeting. Before we begin, I'd like
25 to go over a few things.

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1 Speakers will be called in the order in which
2 you registered, at which point your line will be
3 unmuted. A court reporter will transcribe your oral
4 comments to produce in preparing the Final Environmental
5 Impact Statement. Please do not provide any personal
6 information in your comments that you would not want to
7 see published in the Final EIS.

8 Please speak slowly and clearly, so that the
9 court reporter can easily record your comments. Please
10 state your full name and spell it out for the court
11 reporter and indicate if you are representing a group or
12 organization today.

13 Each speaker will be allotted three minutes.
14 You do not have to speak for the full three minutes;
15 however, when 30 seconds remains, I will let you know.
16 When your time has elapsed, I will also notify you and
17 ask if you could please complete your comments, and then
18 I will mute your line in preparation of the next
19 speaker.

20 Out of respect for others who wish to provide
21 comments, we ask that you please honor your three
22 minutes. If you think you have more comments than you
23 can present in the time allotted, please make the most
24 important comments first. The time limit has been set
25 at each and every meeting to ensure everyone who wishes

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1 to speak has a fair and equal opportunity to provide
2 their comments.

3 If you do not get a chance to voice all your
4 comments, you can submit them in writing or
5 electronically, as Danielle addressed earlier in the
6 meeting. If you have a written statement already
7 prepared, you may read it aloud, and we also recommend
8 that you submit it as a written or electronic comment.

9 Please feel free to provide comments in either
10 oral or written form. Both types of comments are given
11 the same and equal weight in the final document.

12 Finally, this online public meeting allows you
13 to provide comments that will be transcribed. OEA will
14 not answer questions or respond to comments during this
15 portion of the meeting. OEA will respond to comments in
16 the Final Environmental Impact Statement. This will
17 allow as much time as possible for members of the public
18 to comment.

19 I will now call upon our first speaker, which
20 is Mike O'Brien.

21 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Mike, I have unmuted your
22 line.

23 Are you there?

24 MIKE O'BRIEN: I am here. Can you hear me?

25 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: I can. Mike, you have

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1 three minutes.

2 MIKE O'BRIEN: Thank you. My name is
3 Mike O'Brien, spelled O, apostrophe, B-r-i-e-n. I am a
4 Seattle City Council member. I'm commenting today on
5 behalf of the Seattle City Council. We have previously
6 submitted a letter to the Surface Transportation Board
7 expressing our concerns about this project and the
8 comprehensive EIS, analyzing the impact to our city. My
9 comments today will talk about what the letter says and
10 add some other points.

11 The first thing I want to be clear on, the
12 City of Seattle is recommending and requesting that the
13 Surface Transportation Board choose the "No-Action"
14 alternative for these following reasons: The first, we
15 don't believe that the STB has considered the downline
16 impact to the west of the proposed rail line and wrongly
17 assumes that the coal in the Tongue River Railroad -- on
18 the Tongue River Railroad will be destined for plants in
19 the Midwest.

20 If the coal export terminals on the West Coast
21 are approved and another mine is developed in the
22 Tongue River area, this new rail line could move more
23 than 26 trains per day, and many of those trains will be
24 coming through our region and our city.

25 Domestic markets are rapidly shrinking, and

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1 Montana railways have expressed -- would expect to
2 increase its coal exports to terminals for overseas
3 markets.

4 We also know that Otter Creek Coal has a
5 higher sodium content than other Powder River Basin coal
6 and can't be burned in most domestic coal plants, which
7 is another indication that it's likely to be shipped
8 overseas and impact our local areas.

9 The second reason I want to highlight is the
10 impact of coal dust and coal on our communities. We
11 know that these trains lose coal as they transport
12 through our communities, and those impacts have health
13 impacts on our communities.

14 The third thing I want to highlight are the
15 traffic impacts, and this one can't be emphasized
16 enough. This many coal trains coming through our city
17 in Seattle will have massive implications on the traffic
18 impacts on our grid. And when you add what's proposed
19 here, the cumulative impact of other increased oil
20 export, including things like the Bakken crude oil
21 that's coming through our community, the cumulative
22 impact of all of these will have a significant impact,
23 an even greater impact on our community.

24 These impacts on transportation locally, not
25 just in Seattle, but in cities in King County and

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1 Washington State up and down this line must be mitigated
2 if this project is going to go forward, and I don't
3 believe the EIS has studied the proper mitigation of
4 these impacts.

5 The cost to deal with railroad crossings in
6 our city is significant and should be borne fairly by
7 the responsible parties that are creating those impacts.

8 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: You have 30 seconds
9 remaining.

10 MIKE O'BRIEN: Thank you.

11 The fourth and final point I want to make is
12 that building this railroad will add a significant
13 amount of carbon to our atmosphere. Seattle and
14 Washington State, cities around the country, have
15 committed to reduce our carbon emissions, and the carbon
16 emissions that will be produced from this railroad by
17 opening up these coals exports needs to be part of the
18 analysis.

19 Please choose the "No-alt" -- the -- sorry,
20 choose the "No-Action" alternative for this project.

21 Thank you very much.

22 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thank you for your
23 comments.

24 Our next speaker is Carrie Logan.

25 CARRIE LOGAN: Good afternoon. My name is

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1 Carrie Logan, and I'm the mayor of the city of
2 Sandpoint, Idaho, a town of 7200 on the shores of
3 Lake Pend Oreille and the Pend Oreille River. We are
4 historically referenced as "the funnel" because of the
5 convergence of three rail lines: Union Pacific, BNSF,
6 and Montana Railway.

7 Please choose the "No-Action" alternative for
8 the following reasons: The STB has not considered
9 downline impacts to the west of the proposed rail line
10 and wrongly assumes that the coal is destined for
11 domestic plants in the Midwest.

12 The DEIS states that if coal export terminals
13 are approved on the West Coast and other mines are
14 developed in the Tongue River Railroad area, the new
15 rail line could move more than 26 trains per day. Many
16 of those trains will be coming through Sandpoint.

17 As a result of the increase in installation of
18 sidings and improved track sensors, BNSF is scheduling
19 much faster deliveries. Spokane to Chicago was
20 121 hours and has been reduced to 65 hours. Chicago to
21 Spokane was 105 hours and will be reduced to 68 hours.
22 The faster delivery time means more trains can occupy
23 the rail space, resulting in increased availability for
24 coal deliveries to the West Coast.

25 Domestic coal markets are rapidly shrinking, 15

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1 and the Montana Rail Link has stated locally that it
2 expects to increase shipments to export terminals for
3 overseas markets.

4 The OEA study concluded that most of the coal
5 would be used domestically, in the Midwest. However,
6 economic changes could easily shift, and a large portion
7 of the Tongue River Railroad coal could be exported from
8 the Pacific Coast. If this occurs, rail traffic, rail
9 traffic safety, and environmental impacts would likely
10 increase to the downline segments west of Tongue River.

11 Appendix C of the EIS has provided a scenario
12 where as much as 53 percent of the coal would be
13 exported rather than used domestically.

14 Quote, "Tongue River Railroad coal would be
15 closer to export terminals than most other coal sources,
16 including coal currently produced in the Wyoming portion
17 of the Powder River Basin," end quote.

18 Otter Creek coal, as stated before, has a
19 higher sodium content than other Powder River Basin coal
20 and can't be burned in most domestic coal plants, so it
21 is destined for overseas markets.

22 Coal trains are known to spill coal dust and
23 coal, and its impact on health and safety, while the
24 railroad requires shippers to spray coal cars with
25 surfactant to keep down the dust, it only is estimated

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1 that 30 percent of shippers comply with the rule.
2 Because the surfactant wears off and has to be
3 reapplied, BNSF is building a station to apply
4 surfactant in the Tri-Cities after the trains pass
5 through Sandpoint, Idaho.

6 Traffic impacts haven't been addressed. The
7 DEIS doesn't call for any mitigation to make the
8 railroad partners pay their fair share of crossing
9 improvements. Rail traffic is expected to double with
10 the increase in Bakken oil trains and coal trains
11 through North Idaho. North Idaho has a number of
12 unprotected, at-grade crossings. The increase in trains
13 will mean more trains and cars and delays for emergency
14 responders.

15 Many at-grade crossings will need
16 improvements, and our local and state jurisdictions
17 cannot afford to pay on their own for grade separations.

18 Building this railroad will add a country's
19 worth of carbon to our atmosphere.

20 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: You have 30 seconds.

21 CARRIE LOGAN: Thank you.

22 Studies have shown that mercury burned in
23 China finds its way back to the inland Northwest faster
24 by the Jet Stream than it took for the coal to be
25 shipped to China in the first place. Western downline

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1 impacts have not been adequately addressed in this
2 Draft EIS, and I urge you to choose the "No-Action"
3 alternative.

4 Thank you very much.

5 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thank you for your
6 comments.

7 Our next speaker this morning is Jewell James.

8 Just give me a moment. I'm going to mute a
9 couple lines, because I don't see Mr. James on the list.

10 Jewell James, are you on the line?

11 Again, our next speaker is Jewell James.

12 Are you on the line?

13 Okay. I will come back to Mr. James at the
14 end of the meeting.

15 So our next speaker is Kathleen Patton.

16 I'm going to unmute your line.

17 Kathleen, are you there?

18 KATHLEEN PATTON: I am here. Can you hear me?

19 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: I can. Thanks so much.

20 You have three minutes.

21 KATHLEEN PATTON: Thank you. So I am
22 Kathleen Patton. I am a pastor here in Longview,
23 Washington, where a very large coal export terminal has
24 been sited and is under environmental impact study at
25 the EC.

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1 I'm a person of faith, and I'm begging you all
2 to recognize the downline impacts of these coal trains.
3 Please recognize that harm is not limited to the people
4 where the train tracks are laid, but all the way down
5 through all the lovely rural and small-town communities,
6 through Spokane, Sandpoint, Columbia River Gorge, and my
7 own town of Longview, Washington -- and harm does not
8 stop there -- as well as Asia, to foul the air, and on
9 worldwide, through carbon pollution.

10 It is crazy, fractured logic to imagine
11 artificial boundaries protecting anybody. Limiting the
12 scope of your EIS to local impacts is like putting a
13 no-peeing section in a swimming pool. In such a
14 scenario, everybody pays the pollution price so a few
15 can profit: The land, the tribes, the ranches, the
16 farms, the communities along the way, the children who
17 live along the tracks and near the terminals in my
18 hometown of Longview, for instance.

19 Government agencies are here to protect the
20 people, all the people, from the greed of few. The
21 few -- limited scope of your environmental review to the
22 narrow area surrounding those 40 miles of track, who
23 will protect the rest of us? Who will protect Longview,
24 the Columbia Gorge, the people, land, air, and the very
25 climate of our planet? The atmosphere has no

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1 boundaries, and carbon pollution does not respect
2 borders.

3 As surely as those rail lines connect
4 Otter Creek and Longview, your decisions will impact us
5 all, wherever you arbitrarily draw the line. I beg you
6 to include us all, include the generations yet unborn
7 who will reap the whirlwind sown by Arch Coal in
8 drought, deluge, and license below.

9 Please protect us all with a complete EIS.

10 Thank you.

11 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thank you for your
12 comments.

13 Our next speaker this morning is
14 Jonathan Matthews.

15 Just give me one moment, and I will unmute
16 your line.

17 Mr. Matthews, are you with us?

18 JONATHAN MATTHEWS: Hello. I'm here.

19 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Great. You have three
20 minutes.

21 JONATHAN MATTHEWS: Thank you. So I'm
22 Jonathan Matthews. I am the energy committee chair of
23 the Montana chapter of the Sierra Club, and I'm sure it
24 will be no surprise to hear that the Montana chapter of
25 the Sierra Club, which is 2,000 Montanans, want you to

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1 choose the "No-Action" alternative.

2 You know, Tongue River Railroad, it's good for
3 Arch Coal, perhaps, but it's bad for Montanans and for
4 everybody else in the Northwest. We are tired of being
5 told to accept projects that will open the door to
6 unprecedented coal exploitation that will devastate
7 hard-won livelihoods across our region.

8 The Surface Transportation Board must study
9 the railroad's impacts on all potentially harmed
10 communities: Those near the mines and the rail lines to
11 the final destination. Once the board fully considers
12 those impacts, it should say no to the Tongue River
13 Railroad, which is nothing more than a last-ditch
14 attempt to prop up a single failing coal company at the
15 expense of hundreds of thousands of Montanans and dozens
16 of communities throughout the West.

17 The Tongue River Railroad would make our
18 families sick by spewing an average of 500 pounds of
19 coal dust per rail car per day along 1300 miles of
20 railroad, once it connects to the existing system going
21 to the Pacific Coast. That adds up to 240 tons of coal
22 dust pumped into our land and into our air and water
23 every single day.

24 The Tongue River Railroad would threaten our
25 safety. Our mere state tracks were not meant for such a

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1 heavy load of heavy coal trains, which can increase the
2 risk of derailment. Explosive oil trains share the same
3 rails.

4 We won't put our communities at risk for
5 Arch Coal's last-ditch attempt to avoid bankruptcy.
6 This railroad would permanently devastate family ranches
7 in Montana and pollute our air and water to provide
8 short-term health for a failing industry and a single
9 struggling coal company, Arch Coal.

10 The Tongue River Railroad would hurt industry.
11 Warmer summers and drier winters have already begun to
12 affect countless businesses and workers who rely on
13 Northwest farms, fish, and forests; yet Arch wants this
14 railroad, in order to open one of the largest proposed
15 coal mines in the lower 48 states at Otter Creek,
16 Montana, and bring with it billions of tons of climate
17 pollution when that coal is burned. Otter Creek would
18 generate a carbon pollution of up to 656 additional
19 coal-fire power plants, setting the West on a climate
20 change path we do not want to follow.

21 Please hear us. Choose the "No-Action"
22 alternative.

23 Thank you very much.

24 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thank you for your
25 comments.

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1 Jewell James, did you join the meeting yet?

2 Is Mr. James on the line?

3 SPEAKER: This is not Jewell James.

4 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Okay.

5 Our next speaker is Michael O'Leary.

6 I have unmuted your line.

7 Can you hear me?

8 MICHAEL O'LEARY: Yes, I can.

9 Can you hear me?

10 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: I can. You have three
11 minutes.

12 MICHAEL O'LEARY: Great. My name is
13 Michael O'Leary. For the record, M-i-c-h-a-e-l, O,
14 apostrophe, L-e-a-r-y.

15 I'm representing the Association of
16 Northwest Steelheaders. And first I'd like to say we
17 appreciate the opportunity. I'd like to thank the staff
18 and the hearing officials for making this online hearing
19 possible today.

20 I'm speaking on behalf of the 1500 members of
21 the eleven chapters of the Association of Northwest
22 Steelheaders, where we fish for family fun and for
23 healthy food throughout the Columbia River Basin. And
24 we address the "No-Action" alternative because the
25 Tongue River Railroad will hurt the 3 billion-dollar

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1 fishing economy and the 10,000 jobs that depend on it.
2 In particular, we're focused, obviously, then, on the
3 downline impacts, the biological and the economics
4 impacted by these coal trains.

5 I want to point out, at the outset here, a few
6 remarks that it really is an error to believe in the
7 probability that these coal trains are destined for
8 domestic markets. Our domestic markets are shrinking.
9 There's just no future in it. It's the wrong time to be
10 adding coal, the supply, to that market.

11 The right place to be adding, economically
12 speaking, and the safest, most logical, most impartial
13 understanding of where these trains are destined is the
14 overseas, trans-Pacific market, where vast and
15 expanding, competitive markets for our crops are
16 available. I think if you just look at the trade
17 journals, you'll find conventional support for that, but
18 it's simply just a law of supply and demand. To believe
19 otherwise is just really, I guess, [indiscernible],
20 feels like.

21 And these impacts of the coal dust on the
22 Columbia River have already emitted and are already
23 visible, thanks to the exports already leaving down the
24 Columbia River up through Washington and out Vancouver,
25 British Columbia, for overseas markets. I can see it.

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1 I can take you to it right now. You can find places all
2 up and down the Columbia River Gorge where you can find
3 coal dust blown off the tracks.

4 The tracks, by the way, are over a 150-mile
5 stretch where they're immediately adjacent to the
6 Columbia River. And by "immediately adjacent," I mean
7 in some places, there's a simple highway that stretches
8 for hundreds of yards where they've connected basically
9 a cove of the river with tracks and piled rock
10 underneath it. They're actually stretching out over
11 literally the middle of the river -- side of the river,
12 rather. And in other cases, they're as far as 20 yards
13 away, maybe 50 yards away.

14 But the Columbia River Gorge, famous for the
15 best wind-surfing in America, is a windy place to go,
16 and you can see where the coal dust is spilling into the
17 waterway. If you add, like, 20 trains a day, 100 cars,
18 a pound a mile, we're talking about easily hundreds of
19 millions of pounds of coal dust. That is substantial,
20 bioavailable, and it's bad for fish.

21 Thanks for your time. I think we'll submit
22 our additional written comments very shortly and
23 appreciate the opportunity to be heard and considered
24 seriously.

25 Thank you.

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1 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thank you for your
2 comments.

3 Our next speaker today is Caitlin Cromwell.

4 Caitlin Cromwell, are you on the line?

5 Caitlin Cromwell, are you on the line?

6 Okay. Our next speaker is Scott Skokos.

7 Mr. Skokos, are you on the line?

8 Our next speaker today is Liz Stelk.

9 Liz Stelk, are you on the line?

10 Our next speaker is Kevin Dowling,

11 D-o-w-l-i-n-g.

12 Kevin Dowling, are you on the line?

13 Our next speaker is Marvel Karch, K-a-r-c-h.

14 Marvel Karch, are you on the line?

15 Our next speaker today is Sara Kendall.

16 Sara Kendall, are you on the line?

17 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I'll be back in a

18 little bit, you guys.

19 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Sara Kendall, are you on

20 the line?

21 Our next speaker is Anne Hedges.

22 Anne Hedges, are you on the line?

23 ANNE HEDGES: I am here.

24 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Okay. Great. And you

25 have -- yep. I can hear you. Three minutes.

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1 ANNE HEDGES: Okay. There -- my name's
2 Anne Hedges, A-n-n-e, H-e-d-g-e-s. I'm with the Montana
3 Environmental Information Center.

4 There are a lot of pages in this document, but
5 there's very little information in the Draft
6 Environmental Impact Study. It's a good thing that
7 cut-and-paste is a tool that is available to the
8 drafters of this document, but it doesn't mean that the
9 thousands of pages actually say anything meaningful.

10 The assumptions regarding coal markets are
11 critical to the impact analysis, but they are
12 unavailable to the public, housed in the public
13 comments -- on even review impact analysis, without
14 being able to know what went into the bottle to develop
15 these analyses.

16 If coal is going to be displaced, this STB
17 must say which coal mines are most likely to be
18 impacted. There are no mines slated for closure, and
19 surely it is a related action to cause the closure of
20 one coal mine by opening up another.

21 Under the "but for" test, the new mines, the
22 old mine -- but for the new mine, the old mines would
23 continue to operate. At least two mines in Montana are
24 in jeopardy from the Otter Creek coal mine.

25 First, the Crow Nation in Montana received the₂₇

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1 majority of its nonfederal funds from the operation of
2 Westmoreland Absaloka Mine. That mine is the closest
3 mine that is a not a mine-mouth operation. It serves a
4 similar market as what the Draft Environmental Impact
5 Study says the Otter Creek Coal Mine will serve, the
6 Upper Midwest.

7 The Otter Creek Mine will be closer to market
8 and therefore potentially undercut the price of the
9 Absaloka coal. The Absaloka Mine has been shipping coal
10 since 1974, which means the easiest coal to mine has
11 likely already been mined. If Otter Creek is going to
12 displace any mine, it is probably this mine.

13 What will that mean for the Crow Nation? That
14 is a reasonably foreseeable impact and should be
15 included, as it will have harsh consequences for the
16 Crow tribe.

17 The other mine that could be displaced is the
18 geographically closest mine, the Rosebud Mine, created
19 by Western Energy, which serves the Colstrip Power
20 Plant. That mine has been operating since 1968. It is
21 likely the easiest and cheapest coal -- it is likely
22 that the easiest and cheapest coal to recover has been
23 mined from that mine. If the Tongue River Railroad and
24 the Otter Creek Mine are going to displace a mine, it is
25 reasonably foreseeable that it would be this mine, since

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1 the company's preferred rail route goes right by that
2 line.

3 The Rosebud Mine is a union mine. Arch Coal's
4 Otter Creek Mine will not be union. This impact and
5 others related to the potential displacement of the
6 Rosebud Mine and its workers should be disclosed and
7 analyzed.

8 If the STB refuses to analyze what mines are
9 likely to be displaced by the Otter Creek coal, then it
10 is admitting the new coal mines mined at Otter Creek
11 will not displace any existing coal mines. Instead,
12 that is a concession that this coal will be additional
13 and result in 2.6 billion tons or more of greenhouse
14 gasses going into the already overtaxed atmosphere as a
15 result of this railroad. Those impacts are real, and
16 they must be considered.

17 Montana already suffers from extensive
18 wildfire seasons, agricultural impacts, decreased winter
19 recreation, changes to hunting and fishing
20 opportunities. These impacts and many others have
21 social, economic, and moral consequences that must be
22 disclosed.

23 The conclusions reached by the STB that impact
24 to fish and wildlife may be substantial, but are minor,
25 reflects someone who lives back East and doesn't care a 29

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1 whit about what actually happens on the ground in
2 Montana and has reached these conclusions without doing
3 one original fish study.

4 STB has done a lousy job of disclosing and
5 analyzing impacts from this railroad. It should choose
6 the "No-Action" alternative. The railroad is unneeded.
7 It has a high impact, and it is morally objectionable.
8 We don't want it, and we don't need it.

9 Thank you.

10 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thank you for your
11 comments.

12 Our next speaker is Peter Cornelison.

13 Peter Cornelison, are you on the line?

14 Is Peter Cornelison, C-o-r-n-e-l-i-s-o-n, on
15 the line?

16 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: If you want to listen
17 in on this at all, you can.

18 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Our next speaker is
19 Don Steinke.

20 I'm going to unmute all the lines to see if
21 Don Steinke is on the line.

22 DON STEINKE: I'm here.

23 Can you hear me?

24 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: I can hear you. Perfect.
25 You have three minutes.

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1 DON STEINKE: Thank you.

2 My name is D-o-n, S-t-e-i-n-k-e. I'm a
3 citizen of Vancouver, Washington.

4 Arch Coal is seeking permits for America's
5 largest coal export terminal in Longview, Washington.
6 So this railroad is intended to feed a massive coal
7 export terminal. The coal industry has said the most
8 important city in Montana is Longview, Washington.

9 The agencies have spent two years here
10 preparing the Draft EIS for the Longview terminal. I
11 urge the "No-Action" alternative, because your Draft EIS
12 has ignored the Longview component of the Arch Coal plan
13 and has ignored the impacts to Vancouver and all the
14 other rail communities in our state.

15 Nothing can upset the tribes more here than
16 the coal trains which endanger their treaty fishing
17 rights. Google "Columbia Waterfront" to see the
18 billion-dollar development underway in Vancouver. We've
19 already spent \$50 million developing it. Coal trains
20 will sabotage its success.

21 The wind has already blown coal dust onto our
22 food from existing coal train traffic. The coal trains
23 will lower property values and raise taxes for grade
24 separations.

25 According to the EPA, every dollar spent

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1 reducing diesel emissions reduces healthcare costs by
2 \$4. The diesel emissions would be going to help
3 2 million people. A huge pile of coal in Longview will
4 degrade the health of the people there. The atmospheric
5 levels of CO2 are already too high. It is not good
6 enough to prevent increases. We need reductions.

7 We are on the eve of destruction, and we can't
8 hope to prevent the worst effects of climate change by
9 enabling more extraction of fossil fuels. The
10 temperature has risen only .8 degrees Celsius, and look
11 what we have: Record floods in Calgary, Colorado,
12 Texas, and Tbilisi, Georgia; record ground and forest
13 fires in the American West. We have adequate
14 precipitation, but it arrived as rain rather than snow.
15 No snow pack, no food.

16 Since carbon takes thousands of years to drop
17 out of the atmosphere, the only way to bring
18 concentrations down again within a reasonable time is
19 for emissions to drop to zero.

20 The purpose of the Tongue River Railroad is to
21 make the CEO look good. The purpose of you, the purpose
22 of government, is to protect the greater good. You have
23 a public trust obligation to protect the climate for our
24 grandchildren and for their grandchildren.

25 Please choose the "No-Action" alternative.

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1 Thank you.

2 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thank you for your
3 comments.

4 Our next speaker today is Jerry White.

5 Jerry, are you there?

6 JERRY WHITE: Yes, I am.

7 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Great. You have three
8 minutes.

9 JERRY WHITE: My name is Jerry White,
10 J-e-r-r-y, W-h-i-t-e. I am with Spokane Riverkeeper. I
11 represent the Spokane River and the Riverkeeper Program,
12 which works for a fishable and swimmable Spokane River.
13 In short, we're public advocates for the Spokane River
14 and work to conserve this community's river and protect
15 it from those forces that threaten its health and its
16 well-being. The Spokane River is the heart and soul of
17 our city, and without a healthy river, our community is
18 not healthy.

19 We believe that the construction of this
20 railroad will have several major impacts on our river
21 and our community.

22 We oppose the construction of the Tongue River
23 Railroad and urge the Surface Transportation Board to
24 take the "No-Action" alternative.

25 First, coal dust is a destructive impact. The₃₃

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1 proposed railroad will eventually carry 18 to 26 coal
2 trains per day, and the EIS wrongly assumes zero impact
3 on adjacent communities.

4 Much of this coal would travel through
5 Spokane, Washington, to terminals on the West Coast. As
6 such, Spokane could see as many as 40 trains per day
7 over our river and through our cities.

8 Burlington Northern Santa Fe studies have
9 shown that each coal car loses as many as 500 pounds of
10 raw coal from uncovered cars, each trek these cars
11 cover, to our rivers and our tributaries to our river.

12 We have actually found coal in our creeks
13 along the banks of these rivers, and this dust is laden
14 with heavy metals and is toxic to consumers and across
15 the systems. The construction of the railroad will
16 discharge more coal and coal dust into our waterways and
17 into our urban neighborhoods.

18 Additionally, coal dust has been shown to have
19 a negative impact on rail infrastructure, and that dust
20 is corrosive and weakens the rail lines.

21 Spokane is the site of accelerated oil-by-rail
22 traffic, and with weakened rails, increases the odds of
23 catastrophic rail accidents and consequent oil spills
24 and car fires in our communities and on our river.

25 Secondly, the global combustion of coal is

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1 depriving our river and community of water. Otter Creek
2 is the largest proposed coal mine in the United States
3 and represents 1.3 billion tons of coal that is mined
4 will contribute to climate change for the next 55 years.
5 The combustion of coal across the Earth has been shown
6 to have effects on Northwest climate by emitting
7 greenhouse gases, and the impact of this combustion on
8 the Spokane River can no longer be denied and
9 understated. The development of Otter Creek Mine and
10 the Tongue River Railroad will only exacerbate this
11 effect.

12 This year, snow packs in the mountains of
13 Eda River was at an all-time low, an impact brought on
14 by extremely warm waters off the Pacific Ocean. At this
15 moment, our river is running at 1,100 cubic feet per
16 second. It normally runs at 10,000, which is -- so it's
17 currently a tenth of normal flow at the front end of our
18 dry season. We've never seen these low flows in
19 recorded history.

20 To expand the factor of coal-fired energy is
21 to actively destroy our river. By extension, our
22 citizens and businesses are being deprived of a
23 community asset that has been the foundation of our
24 culture, our economics, and our history since its
25 founding.

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1 Finally, coal combustion is poisoning our
2 water in our state with methylmercury. The conducting
3 of coal in any of these incidents has been shown to
4 contribute toxic methylmercury into the Pacific
5 Northwest waterways.

6 Asia emits somewhere around 1500 tons of
7 mercury a year, and much of it is returned to our waters
8 via atmospheric transport. According to sources at the
9 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, mercury
10 and other airborne contaminants collect over time during
11 the winter and spring until Siberian winds arrive
12 bearing the dust from China and deliver it to our
13 Northwest.

14 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: You have 30 seconds.

15 JERRY WHITE: We live in Washington State, and
16 the Spokane River currently has fish advisories for
17 methylmercury. Nobody in our community can eat those
18 fish without worrying about the effects of methylmercury
19 from the combustion of coal.

20 The construction of the railroad, the
21 Tongue River Railroad, will have a lasting negative
22 impact on our community, on the river, and our rural.
23 We ask the Surface Transportation Board to take the
24 "No-Action" alternative.

25 Thanks a lot for the opportunity to comment.

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1 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thank you for your comment.

2 JERRY WHITE: Yep.

3 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Our next speaker is
4 Daniel Serres.

5 I'm going to unmute your line.

6 Are you there?

7 Daniel Serres?

8 Dan Serres, S-e-r-r-e-s, are you there?

9 Daniel Serres, S-e-r-r-e-s, are you on the
10 line?

11 Okay. Our next speaker is Lynn Patrick Doyle.

12 I'm going to unmute all the lines.

13 Lynn Patrick Doyle, are you on the line?

14 All lines are currently unmuted.

15 Lynn Patrick Doyle, are you on the line?

16 Our next speaker is Derf Johnson

17 Derf Johnson, are you on the line?

18 Derf Johnson?

19 Okay. All lines are still unmuted.

20 Our next speaker is Garrit Voggesser,
21 V-o-g-g-e-s-s-e-r.

22 Is Garrit on the line?

23 Okay. All lines are still unmuted.

24 Is Matt Petryni, P-e-t-r-y-n-i, on the line?

25 Matt Petryni, P-e-t-r-y-n-i, are you on the

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1 line?

2 Okay. I just got a note.

3 Daniel Serres, S-e-r-r-e-s, are you here?

4 Mr. Serres, if you're talking, we're not able
5 to hear you, so you may want to hang up and call back
6 in. I will call your name again in just a few minutes.

7 We do see that you are on the line, but we are
8 unable to hear you.

9 Our next speaker is Tom Crawford,
10 C-r-a-w-f-o-r-d.

11 Tom Crawford, are you on the line?

12 Tom Crawford, are you on the line?

13 Daniel Serres, are you on the line?

14 DANIEL SERRES: I am. Can you hear me now?

15 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Yes.

16 Dan, are you there?

17 DANIEL SERRES: I am, yes. Thank you for
18 queuing me back up.

19 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: No problem. You have three
20 minutes.

21 DANIEL SERRES: Great. So my name is
22 Dan Serres. Last name is S-e-r-r-e-s. I'm the
23 conservation director for Columbia Riverkeeper.

24 Years ago, my brother was a teacher in
25 Ashland, Montana. I remember talk of the Tongue River

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1 Railroad back in those days. I didn't really imagine
2 that years and years later, we would be joined with the
3 folks in Ashland, Montana, because we here on the lower
4 Columbia River are dealing with very large coal export
5 facilities that are directly connected to the proposed
6 Tongue River Railroad.

7 Riverkeeper and our members in Oregon and
8 Southwest Washington absolutely support the "No-Action"
9 alternative. We ask the Surface Transportation Board to
10 select that alternative. At the very least, the STB
11 should take a hard look at withdrawing the Draft
12 Environmental Impact Statement and issuing a new one,
13 because it's inadequate in addressing the
14 downline impacts on places like the Columbia River
15 Estuary.

16 We were surprised not so much that comments
17 from groups like our own were ignored, but we were a bit
18 surprised that the Surface Transportation Board largely
19 ignored the concerns of the State of Washington. The
20 Department of Ecology weighed in with the STB, asking
21 them to look at the impacts of the induced coal export
22 shipping that would happen in the state of Washington.
23 They list a bunch of impacts in a letter they wrote in
24 January of 2013, including traffic impacts from
25 increased rail traffic, including delays to emergency

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1 vehicles, overall rail line capacity, spill prevention,
2 response requirements, potential train derailments, coal
3 dust emissions from locomotives, including part --
4 particulate matter and greenhouse gasses.

5 They went on to say in January 2013 that
6 Washington citizens are raising many valid questions
7 about this and how it will affect our communities and
8 the state.

9 The Council on Environmental Quality issues
10 guidance to federal agencies that the range of actions
11 that must be considered includes not only the project
12 proposal but all connected and similar actions that
13 could contribute to cumulative impacts.

14 The federal coal export projects have begun
15 the environmental review process in Washington,
16 including a review by the Army Corps of Engineers. We
17 believe that as a community, NEPA agencies, the
18 Surface Transportation Board, has a responsibility to
19 look at the direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts for
20 the related projects in the region that are connected to
21 the Tongue River Railroad.

22 The letter that was written by the Department
23 of Ecology was signed by then director of ecology, Ted
24 Sturdevant. And, again, it's pretty telling that the
25 Surface Transportation Board issued a Draft

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1 Environmental Impact Statement that really sidestepped
2 those concerns.

3 The stakes are high for us here in the
4 Columbia River, where this massive coal export terminal
5 is proposed in Longview and where coal trains headed to
6 Bellingham would also come down the Columbia River
7 Gorge.

8 The impact of coal exports in the
9 Columbia River, which serves parts of the state. The
10 project would involve dredging the Columbia River,
11 heat-stoking coal storage piles near critical salmon
12 habitats, and dozens of new trains each day on the
13 tracks along the Columbia River.

14 According to ecology here in Washington, three
15 proposals already in the environmental review process
16 could result in 37 additional unit trains per day,
17 trains in Washington State, having 13,000 more trains
18 per year.

19 So federal and state agencies here on the
20 Columbia River have been working for decades to protect
21 and recover salmon, and these coal export trains and the
22 coal export terminal in Longview will be plunked down
23 right in the middle of the most important habitat for
24 salmon recovery.

25 The Federal Government's chief responsibility 41

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1 is to mitigate the impacts of federally licensed dams.
2 And one of the places where they do that is right there
3 in the Columbia River Estuary, where these coal
4 terminals will be proposed.

5 These efforts to protect and restore and
6 rehabilitate salmon are undermined by the extensive
7 potential pollution. The habitat laws have braced for
8 an accident that are associated with all the effects of
9 coal exports, including the terminals, the trains, and
10 the oceangoing tankers. And the Tongue River Railroad
11 is a big part of this in this picture.

12 We ask that you select -- the Surface
13 Transportation Board select the "No-Action" alternative,
14 and at the very least that the STB will withdraw the
15 DEIS, because it's far from a near-complete document,
16 and it contains numerous errors and omissions, including
17 the obvious omission of considering the indirect and
18 induced impacts of downrail communities like our own.

19 Thanks very much for your time.

20 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thank you for your
21 comments.

22 Tom Crawford, are you on the line?

23 Our next speaker is Tom Crawford. I'm going
24 to unmute all the lines.

25 Tom Crawford, are you there?

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1 TOM CRAWFORD: Yes. I am on the line.

2 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Okay. I can hear you.

3 Go ahead, Tom. You have three minutes.

4 TOM CRAWFORD: Thank you.

5 I am a board member of a local nonprofit
6 called the Thurston Climate Action Team based in the
7 Olympia, Washington area. We have been working for the
8 last six years on collaborating with both the economic
9 development council and elected officials, including
10 city councils and county commissioners, on improving
11 energy efficiency, promoting clean energy in our
12 communities, in order to bring down our greenhouse gas
13 emissions.

14 As part of that effort, we have conducted a
15 greenhouse gas inventory community-wide and found that
16 our current emissions throughout our county are about
17 2.8 million tons of carbon dioxide equivalent. The
18 emissions that will in fact result from the
19 implementation of the proposed rail line -- because its
20 sole purpose is to transport carbon-emission-producing
21 coal, mostly to China and other external operations
22 outside the United States, where it's devoid any of our
23 efforts to reduce our own greenhouse gas emissions --
24 the carbon emissions resulting from that will be so
25 massive.

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1 I'd like to talk about some other things that
2 will result from this action. We -- our county board
3 of -- our county health and social services department
4 about four years ago conducted a study of the health
5 effects in our communities from greenhouse gas emissions
6 from global warming, and those include increased
7 vector-borne diseases related to breathing difficulty,
8 heart disease, and a variety of other health effects
9 resulting from poor healthcare quality and other effects
10 of global warming.

11 So this is connected to the rail -- the
12 proposed rail line, because the proposed rail line would
13 in fact result in increased global warming effects.

14 I'd also like to point out that the
15 Tongue River Railroad will hurt industry. Warmer
16 summers and drier winters have already begun to affect
17 countless businesses and workers who rely on Northwest
18 farms, fish, and soils, and that affects our communities
19 here in Thurston County.

20 Yet Arch Coal wants this railroad in order to
21 open one of the largest proposed coal mines in the
22 lower 48 states at Otter Creek, Montana, and we will
23 have billions of tons of climate pollution when that
24 coal is burned. Otter Creek can generate the equivalent
25 pollution of up to 656 additional coal-fired public

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1 lands, setting the West on a climate-change path that we
2 do not want to follow.

3 There are other health and safety effects,
4 community impacts, long-term, you know, business reality
5 and financial impacts, including the fact that the
6 long-term financial gamble doesn't really make sense
7 financially.

8 I could talk about other effects, but I really
9 wanted to focus on the effects on our communities as we
10 see it. And so we feel like here in Thurston County, we
11 have a big stake in whether this project goes forward.

12 And we have -- other speakers have cited the
13 fact that this is an incomplete Environmental Impact
14 Statement, based on the information we, in fact, know
15 that is not apparently acknowledged in this
16 Environmental Impact Statement.

17 You know, we encourage that the project not go
18 forward and permanently be denied.

19 Thank you.

20 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thank you for your comment.

21 Our next speaker is Sergei Gibbins.

22 I'm going to unmute all the lines.

23 Sergei Gibbins, G-i-b-b-i-n-s, are you on the
24 line?

25 Sergei Gibbins, G-i-b-b-i-n-s.

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1 Okay. Our next speaker is Robin Everett.

2 Robin, are you on the line? Robin Everett,
3 are you on the line?

4 Our next speaker is Nick Engelfried,
5 E-n-g-e-l-f-r-i-e-d.

6 Nick Engelfried, are you on the line?

7 All lines are still unmuted.

8 Our next speaker is Edward Ury, U-r-y.

9 Edward Ury, U-r-y, are you on the line?

10 Our next speaker is Nicole McDermott.

11 Nicole McDermott, are you on the line?

12 Nicole McDermott, are you on the line?

13 Our next speaker is Scott Keillor,

14 K-e-i-l-l-o-r. Are you on the line?

15 Our next speaker is Mary Brammer.

16 Mary Brammer, are you on the line?

17 MARY BRAMMER: Yes. I am here.

18 Can you hear me?

19 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Yes, I can.

20 Mary, you have three minutes.

21 MARY BRAMMER: Thank you.

22 I'm disappointed that you have all these
23 people lined up and nobody will talk.

24 My name is Mary Brammer, M-a-r-y,

25 B-r-a-m-m-e-r. My husband and I manage a small

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1 8,000-plus-acre ranch along the Tongue River on the east
2 side.

3 We would request that you choose the non-- the
4 "No-Action" alternative or, at minimum, the Eastern
5 alternative for the following reasons.

6 The Tongue River Railroad would put -- would
7 be placed -- put in place along the current access or
8 ingress road to numerous homes, fields, and pasture
9 areas on the eastern side. This is the only access road
10 to the east side of the Tongue River. We have concerns
11 that installation of the railroad will leave us with no
12 way in or out of our home or ranch.

13 To install the railroad along the river route
14 would require cutting into the mountain in several
15 locations. In all your maps online, in the information,
16 we did not see any notation at all on how or where the
17 new access road would be.

18 In addition, in the original east side public
19 meeting that was held in 2012 here in Ashland, we
20 discussed or put in a notation that we have a worry
21 about our shallow artesian wells. We have numerous
22 artesian wells on the ranch that feed not only -- or
23 water the wildlife and cattle. Some of them have a
24 6-by-6-square-foot or 8-by-8-square-foot box to hold the
25 water. As it comes out from there, it goes into a tank.⁴⁷

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1 The information that we received at the public
2 meeting stated that when they start digging the coal out
3 of the ground, they would be draining the water levels
4 as they went. If they did that, it would take away the
5 artesian well or the water lines. Our existing well --
6 and they're approximately 6-foot deep -- if they drain
7 the water levels as they're digging the coal mines, it
8 doesn't show how they're going to regenerate the water,
9 if at all.

10 The last one is concern regarding the fire
11 danger during the construction of the railroad, no
12 matter its location. We've already had three wildfires
13 on the ranch since the first of the year. It's caused
14 by the underground coal lines that are currently
15 burning, and there's no way to put them out.

16 It is also -- we've had two of them started
17 with possibly a piece of glass that was discarded on the
18 ground years ago. There's no way to tell how these
19 fires started. And the construction, anybody tossing a
20 bottle out, a cigarette out the window or over their
21 shoulder or whatever, could cause another fire.

22 And we've worked very hard in the last three
23 years to get the mountains and the hills to regenerate
24 after the last major wildfire of 2012, and we would hate
25 to have another one started during construction.

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1 So we would request that you would choose the
2 "No-Action" alternative or, at the very least, the
3 "Eastern" alternative of the Tongue -- Eastern Tongue
4 River alternative.

5 Thank you.

6 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thank you for your
7 comments.

8 Mary Brammer was the last speaker we had
9 registered today. I'm now going to go and unmute all
10 the lines and go through the folks who didn't speak when
11 their names were called, in case any of you have joined
12 the call since that time.

13 I'm unmuting all the lines.

14 Your lines are all unmuted.

15 Jewell James.

16 JEWELL JAMES: This is Jewell James.

17 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Great.

18 JEWELL JAMES: Can you hear me?

19 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Yes, I can. You have three
20 minutes. Please go ahead.

21 JEWELL JAMES: Okay. My name is Jewell James,
22 J-e-w-e-l-l, J-a-m-e-s. I'm with the Lummi Nation,
23 L-u-m-m-i, in the state of Washington.

24 We're very concerned about the application to
25 transport the coal. We have been monitoring and paying 49

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1 attention to the work that's being proposed for the
2 Otter Creek area. We know that we've been very
3 concerned about coal trains coming here through the
4 Pacific Northwest.

5 We have a treaty with the United States. We
6 have a government-to-government relationship with the
7 United States, and we have been working diligently to
8 try to get our voices heard to stop the coal trains from
9 coming through our aboriginal territory.

10 We worked with the affiliated tribes of
11 Northwest Indians, and all the tribes between
12 Otter Creek to the Pacific Northwest have stood up and
13 opposed the proposed coal trains coming this direction.

14 We oppose the harvest of the coal itself,
15 because of the global-warming impact. We're aware that
16 it is targeted for China often, and China itself is
17 starting to withdraw from using coal because of the
18 severe toxic impact to its air quality. And our concern
19 is that once the coal is burned, within a few days
20 later, it's dropping acid rain here on the waters and
21 the lands of the Pacific Northwest.

22 We are a treaty fishing tribe, and the coal
23 poses a very dangerous impact to our salmon populations.
24 We are already not meeting the amount of salmon we need
25 to sustain our people, and the United States and the

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1 individual states all have a duty to honor our treaty
2 under Article VI of the U.S. Constitution.

3 So we oppose the toxic contamination that the
4 coal will cause.

5 Thank you.

6 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thank you for your
7 comments.

8 At this time, I'm going to unmute all the
9 lines.

10 Is Caitlin Cromwell on the line? Caitlin
11 Cromwell?

12 Is Scott Skokos, S-k-o-k-o-s -- Scott Skokos,
13 S-k-o-k-o-s, are you on the line?

14 Liz Stelk, S-t-e-l-k, Liz Stelk, are you on
15 the line?

16 Okay. All lines are still unmuted.

17 Kevin Dowling, are you on the line?

18 Kevin Dowling?

19 Okay. Marvel Karch, K-a-r-c-h, Marvel Karch,
20 are you on the line?

21 Sara Kendall, K-e-n-d-a-l-l, Sara Kendall, are
22 you on the line?

23 Peter Cornelison, C-o-r-n-e-l-i-s-o-n, are you
24 on the line? Peter Cornelison?

25 Lynn Patrick Doyle, are you on the line?

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1 Lynn Patrick Doyle?

2 Derf Johnson, are you on the line?

3 All lines are still unmuted.

4 Garrit Voggesser, V-o-g-g-e-s-s-e-r, are you
5 on the line? Garrit Voggesser?

6 Matt Petryni, P-e-t-r-y-n-i? Matt Petryni,
7 are you on the line?

8 Sergei Gibbins, are you on the line?

9 All lines are still unmuted.

10 Robin Everett? Robin Everett, are you on the
11 line?

12 Nick Engelfried? Nick Engelfried,
13 E-n-g-e-l-f-r-i-e-d, Nick Engelfried, are you on the
14 line?

15 Edward Ury? Edward Ury, U-r-y, are you on the
16 line?

17 All lines are still unmuted.

18 Edward Ury, U-r-y?

19 Nicole McDermott, are you on the line?

20 Nicole McDermott?

21 And Scott Keillor, are you on the line?

22 Scott Keillor, K-e-i-l-l-o-r?

23 Okay. All lines are still unmuted. That is
24 everyone we had registered to speak today.

25 Is there anyone who has already provided

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1 comments that would like to elaborate on their comments?

2 All lines are unmuted.

3 Is there anyone who would like to elaborate on
4 their earlier comments?

5 Okay. Is there anyone on the line who did not
6 register to speak that would like to provide a comment
7 today? All lines are still unmuted. Is there anyone
8 else who would like to provide comment at today's
9 meeting?

10 We will keep the line open until 3:00 p.m.,
11 Eastern Daylight Time, as advertised. But for those on
12 the meeting now, we will go ahead and conclude this
13 portion.

14 Again, you can submit comments, either in
15 writing or electronically, at tonguerivereis.com, and
16 comments must be received or postmarked by
17 August 24th to be considered in the Final Environmental
18 Impact Statement.

19 Thank you all for your comments and your
20 participation in this online public meeting. Again, we
21 will keep the lines open until 3:00 p.m., in case anyone
22 who registered to speak calls in late.

23 Thank you again for your participation.

24 Ladies and gentlemen, it is now 3:00 p.m. We
25 will now end the public comment meeting.

Meeting 1-6.17.15

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(Whereupon, the proceeding
concluded at 3:00 p.m.)

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CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

STATE OF MONTANA)
) ss.
COUNTY OF)

I, Emily K. Niles, Certified Court Reporter,
do hereby certify:

That I reported in shorthand (Stenotype) the
proceedings had in the above-entitled matter at the
place and date indicated.

That I thereafter transcribed my said
shorthand notes into typewriting, and that the
typewritten transcript is a complete, true and accurate
transcription of my said shorthand notes to the best of
my skill and ability.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have set my hand in my
office in the County of Gallatin, State of Montana, this
day of , 2015.

EMILY K. NILES, CCR #2794
Notary Public in the State of Montana
Residing in Bozeman, Montana
My Commission expires: January 16, 2019

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