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March 14, 2013

The Honorable Daniel R. Elliott III, Chairman
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20423-0001

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FD 30186

The Honorable Ann D. Begeman, Vice Chairman
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20423-0001

ENTERED
Office of Proceedings
March 20, 2013
Part of
Public Record

The Honorable Francis P. Mulvey, Commissioner
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20423-0001

Dear Chairman Elliott, Vice Chairman Begeman, Commissioner Mulvey:

I write regarding the Surface Transportation Board's (the Board) pending permit application for construction of the re-proposed Tongue River Railroad and the Tongue River Railroad Company's (TRRC) preferred alternative, the Colstrip Alignment. I urge the Board to take the time to conduct an analysis on both the transportation merits and the cumulative environmental impacts of the railroad. I believe that this process must consider these impacts in Montana and throughout the affected region.

I ask that the Board review the impacts a new railroad would have on existing regional rail networks and current shippers. For instance, shippers of agricultural products face some of the highest tollage in the country. It is vital to the regional economy that existing shippers are able to continue to financially compete with other shippers and that there is sufficient rail capacity to handle the additional traffic. A full and thorough analysis will also allow communities, decision-makers, and public officials to weigh the true costs and benefits of such a project.

I also encourage the Board to expand the scope of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to include communities along the shipping routes between the mine mouth and the delivery point for the product.

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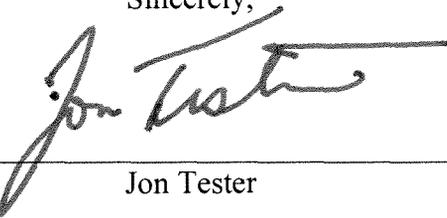
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I urge the Board to expand its scope of study in the Tongue River Railroad EIS and in the transportation merits analysis to include the total cumulative impacts. Thank you for considering my request and I look forward to receiving your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jon Tester", is written over a horizontal line. The signature is fluid and somewhat stylized, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Jon Tester