

**Surface Transportation Board Issues Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement on Tongue River Railroad's Proposed Construction & Operation of "Western Alignment" in Rosebud & Big Horn Counties, Montana**

The Surface Transportation Board announced today that its Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) has issued the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (Draft SEIS) for the Tongue River Railroad, Inc.'s (TRRC) proposed construction and operation of approximately 17.3 miles of new railroad line in Rosebud and Big Horn Counties, Montana. This proposal is contained in TRRC's application in the proceeding entitled *Tongue River Railroad Company, Inc.--Construction and Operation--Western Alignment*, STB Finance Docket No. 30186 (Sub-No. 3), also referred to as *Tongue River III*.

TRRC was previously authorized to construct 89 miles of a rail line between Miles City and Ashland, MT (known as *Tongue River I*) and a contiguous 41-mile line from Ashland to Decker, MT (known as *Tongue River II*). The *Tongue River III* proposal is an alternative routing for the southernmost portion of the alignment previously approved by the Board in *Tongue River II*.

Working with several cooperating agencies (the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management; the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; and the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation acting as the lead agency for other Montana State agencies), SEA issued the Draft SEIS as part of the environmental review process under the National Environmental Policy Act for this proposal to transport coal from existing and future mines in Montana to markets in the midwestern and northeastern states. The Draft SEIS includes SEA's analysis of the potential environmental impacts of *Tongue River III*, as well as SEA's preliminary recommendations for mitigating possible environmental effects.

SEA has distributed the Draft SEIS to all parties of record (official participants in this proceeding), including key governmental agencies and other appropriate entities. SEA has made the Draft SEIS available for review in the Miles City Public Library (1 South 10th Street) in Miles City, and the St. Labre Indian School (1000 Tongue River Road) in Ashland. The entire Draft SEIS is also available for viewing and downloading on the Board's website at [www.stb.dot.gov](http://www.stb.dot.gov).

SEA invites public comment on all aspects of the Draft SEIS, including SEA's proposed mitigation measures, possible alternative mitigation, and the draft Programmatic Agreement, which sets forth the procedures by which the identification and treatment of paleontological and cultural resources would occur. After public comments are received, SEA, working with the cooperating agencies, will issue a Final SEIS. In making its final decision in this case, the STB will consider the entire environmental record, including all public comments, the Draft SEIS, the Final SEIS, and SEA's final environmental mitigation recommendations.

The public may comment on the Draft SEIS by submitting written comments (original and two copies) by **December 6, 2004** to the following address:

**Attn: Kenneth Blodgett**

**STB Docket No. FD 30186 (Sub-No. 3)  
Surface Transportation Board  
Washington, DC 20423-0001**

Written comments may also be filed electronically on the STB's Web site, [www.stb.dot.gov](http://www.stb.dot.gov), by clicking on the "E-FILING" link.

In addition, SEA will host two public meetings on the Draft SEIS at the following locations, dates, and times:

**Miles Community College  
Room 106  
2715 Dickenson  
Miles City, MT 59301**

**Tuesday, November 16, 2004  
7:00-9:00 p.m.**

**St. Labre Indian School  
Auditorium  
1000 Tongue River Road  
Ashland, MT 59003**

**Wednesday, November 17, 2004  
7:00-9:00 p.m.**

The Draft SEIS was issued [today in the case entitled \*Tongue River Railroad Company, Inc.--Construction and Operation--Western Alignment\*, STB Finance Docket No. 30186 \(Sub-No. 3\)](#). For further information, contact SEA's Project Manager for this project, Kenneth Blodgett, at **(202) 565-1554**. A printed copy of the Draft SEIS is available for a fee by contacting **ASAP Document Solutions, 9332 Annapolis Rd., Suite 103, Lanham, MD 20706, telephone (202) 306-4004**, or via [asapdc@verizon.net](mailto:asapdc@verizon.net). <http://www.stb.dot.gov>.

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