

UINTA BASIN RAILWAY

DOCKET NUMBER FD 36284

DRAFT EIS PUBLIC MEETING December 03, 2020

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8 SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
9 UINTA BASIN RAILWAY
10 DOCKET NUMBER FD 36284
11 DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
12 PUBLIC MEETING
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15 Thursday, December 3, 2020

16 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
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23 Reported by: Abigail D.W. Johnson, RPR, CRR, CRC
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December 3, 2020

6:00 p.m.

P R O C E E D I N G S

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JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Ladies and gentlemen,
the time is 6:00 p.m. local time. And we will now
start the Surface Transportation Board Office of
Environmental Analysis or OEA online public meeting.
This online public meeting is for the Uinta Basin
Railway Draft Environmental Impact Statement or EIS.

Thank you everyone for participating. My
name is Jennifer Piggott, and I will serve as your
neutral facilitator this evening. I am with ICF, who
is supporting OEA as an independent third-party
contractor. Also on the line is Josh Wayland, the EIS
project manager with the Surface Transportation Board
Office of Environmental Analysis.

This online public meeting is being
recorded and transcribed. The same presentation will
be made available at each of the six online public
meetings.

If you need assistance with Zoom during the
meeting, you can use the chat feature located at the
bottom of your screen to message the meeting host. We
appreciate your participation in this online public
meeting. We would much rather be with you in person.

1 But with the current conditions, we want to provide all
2 of the information we can while protecting everyone's
3 health.

4 We are going to conduct this as closely as
5 possible to a typical in-person public meeting. Please
6 make note of the phone number of this meeting. The
7 phone number is 877-853-5247, Meeting ID:
8 874-8149-6515, Password: 05649357.

9 If you experience difficulty with your
10 internet connection at any point during this meeting,
11 you can call this number to listen to the meeting.
12 Additionally, individual internet connections and band
13 widths may impact your viewing experience this
14 afternoon. We recommend closing all apps and programs
15 and limiting other streaming or downloads during the
16 meeting.

17 Finally, we're running this meeting using
18 Zoom Webinar, which mutes all participants and
19 restricts video feeds. Only the meeting host can
20 unmute you.

21 For any media representatives that join
22 this afternoon, please contact the EIS project manager,
23 Josh Wayland, for any media queries or interview
24 requests. Mr. Wayland can be reached at
25 joshua.wayland@stb.gov.

1 You can see the meeting topics on the
2 slide. We will conduct the online public meeting in
3 two parts.

4 First, OEA will provide an overview of the
5 proposed project and the environmental review process
6 followed by a facilitated comment session where
7 interested parties can provide oral comments for the
8 record.

9 Before we begin, I would like to review
10 some ground rules for this evening's online public
11 meeting. As previously stated, we will show a
12 presentation and then receive oral comments. We will
13 not host a question-and-answer session during this
14 meeting.

15 Please remember the meeting is being
16 recorded and transcribed, so no inappropriate or
17 threatening language. Commenters will be called on in
18 the order in which they registered with the elected
19 officials given the opportunity to speak first. If you
20 did not preregister to provide an oral comment at this
21 evening's meeting and would like to do so, please send
22 a chat message to the meeting host, raise your hand
23 using the hand raise icon next to the name or for
24 call-in only users press star 9 to raise your hand .
25 We will receive as many comments as time allows.

1 If you are not called on to provide an oral
2 comment this evening, you may provide a written comment
3 electronically through the project website or through
4 the mail. Again, we will make every effort to receive
5 as many oral comments as possible during this evening's
6 meeting.

7 Please submit comments by the close of the
8 comment period, which is December 14th, 2020. We
9 invite you to submit comments in writing via the
10 Board-sponsored project website at
11 www.uintabasinrailwayeis.com or in writing to Joshua
12 Wayland, Surface Transportation Board, c/o ICF, 9300
13 Lee Highway, Fairfax, Virginia, 22031, Attention:
14 Environmental filing, Docket No. FD 36284.

15 OEA will make today's presentation
16 available on the project website. We appreciate the
17 chance to share the proposed project and environmental
18 process with all of you. We wish we could be together
19 in person, but we're glad to come together virtually.

20 Again, the purpose of this online public
21 meeting is to share information about the Draft
22 Environmental Impact Statement, provide information on
23 how to provide comments and to receive oral comments.

24 Now I would like to introduce Joshua
25 Wayland, the EIS project manager with the Surface

1 Transportation Board's Office of Environmental
2 Analysis, for his welcome remarks. Josh?

3 JOSHUA WAYLAND: Hi, thank you Jennifer.
4 Hello everyone, and thank you for joining us this
5 evening. I hope you are all doing well and staying
6 safe and healthy during these difficult times. My name
7 again is Josh Wayland, I am an environmental protection
8 specialist with the Surface Transportation Board's
9 Office of Environmental Analysis. And I am the project
10 manager for the Uinta Basin Railway Draft Environmental
11 Impact Statement.

12 To reiterate one thing that Jennifer said,
13 we are very sorry that we have been unable to be there
14 with you in person for these public meetings, but we
15 are glad to be able to meet with you virtually through
16 this online format. And we're looking forward to
17 hearing your comments a little bit later in the
18 meeting.

19 I see that at this time we have 31 people
20 joining us on the line tonight, including people who
21 tuned in to the webinar and folks who have called in by
22 phone.

23 At this time, I don't believe we have any
24 representatives from the cooperating agencies working
25 with us on this environmental review with us tonight,

1 but if there are any agency representatives or elected
2 officials who have called in, welcome and thank you for
3 attending.

4 Before we move into the comment portion of
5 tonight's meeting, we would like to play a presentation
6 for you that provides a brief overview of the proposed
7 Uinta Basin Railway as well as the Surface
8 Transportation Board's Environmental review process and
9 some of the major conclusions of the Draft
10 Environmental Impact Statement.

11 This presentation will be available on the
12 Board's sponsored project website
13 www.uintabasinrailwayeis.com in case you would like to
14 download it and watch it again later.

15 With that, I would just like to thank
16 everyone once again for their participation and for
17 joining the meeting tonight and ask Jennifer to please
18 go ahead and start the presentation. Hello and welcome
19 to this online public meeting for the Uinta Basin
20 Railway Draft Environmental Impact Statement. The
21 Environmental Impact Statement, or EIS, is being
22 prepared by the Surface Transportation Board, which is
23 the federal agency that authorizes the construction and
24 operation of new rail lines.

25 My name is Josh Wayland, and I work for the

1 Surface Transportation Board's Office of Environmental
2 Analysis. In this presentation, I will provide a very
3 brief overview of the environmental review process, the
4 conclusions of the Draft EIS, and how you can submit
5 your comments on the Draft EIS.

6 Here is the agenda for this presentation.
7 I will start out by providing an overview of the role
8 of my agency, the Surface Transportation Board, as well
9 as the cooperating agencies that are working with us,
10 the Seven County Infrastructure Coalition, which is the
11 project applicant, and the Coalition's proposed
12 project.

13 Next, I will discuss the environmental
14 review process, including the different resource areas
15 that we have analyzed in the Draft EIS, the major
16 conclusions of the Draft EIS, and our preliminary
17 recommendations for mitigating environmental impacts.

18 Then, I will discuss how to access more
19 information about the proposed project and the
20 environmental review. I will then discuss the comment
21 period and the public meetings. And finally, I will
22 explain how you can submit your comments on the Draft
23 EIS.

24 Let's begin with an overview of the
25 proposed project. As I mentioned earlier, I work for a

1 federal agency called the Surface Transportation Board.
2 The Board is the lead agency for the Uinta Basin
3 Railway EIS. It is a bi-partisan independent
4 adjudicatory board with broad economic regulatory
5 oversight over railroads, including railroad rates and
6 service, as well as acquisition, abandonment,
7 construction, and operation of rail lines.

8 When considering whether or not to
9 authorize the construction and operation of a new line
10 of railroad, the Board considers both the
11 transportation merits of the proposal and the potential
12 environmental impacts.

13 The Board's Office of Environmental
14 Analysis, or OEA, is the office at the Board that is
15 responsible for conducting the environmental review for
16 new railroad construction proposals.

17 OEA works under the National Environmental
18 Policy Act, or NEPA, as well as related environmental
19 laws. In this case, OEA is working with five
20 cooperating agencies to conduct the environmental
21 review, including four federal agencies and one state
22 agency. Those agencies are the Bureau of Land
23 Management, the U.S. Forest Service, the U.S. Army
24 Corps of Engineers, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and
25 the State of Utah's Public Lands Policy Coordinating

1 Office.

2 The Draft EIS contains more information
3 about the decisions that the cooperating agencies would
4 be responsible for making if the Board were to
5 authorize the construction and operation of the
6 proposed Uinta Basin Railway.

7 The Uinta Basin Railway is not being
8 proposed, funded, or sponsored by the Federal
9 Government. The project applicant is the Seven County
10 Infrastructure Coalition, or the Coalition. The
11 Coalition proposes to construct and operate an
12 approximately 85-mile rail line extending from two
13 terminus points in the Uinta Basin near South Myton
14 Bench and Leland Bench to an existing Union Pacific
15 Railroad Company rail line near Kyune, Utah.

16 The purpose of the proposed rail line would
17 be to provide common carrier rail service connecting
18 the Uinta Basin to the Interstate Common Carrier Rail
19 Network using a route that would provide shippers with
20 a viable alternative to trucking. The coalition
21 anticipates that the proposed rail line would primarily
22 be used to transport crude oil produced in the Uinta
23 Basin to markets across the United States, but trains
24 on the proposed rail line could also carry other
25 product and commodities, potentially including frac

1 sand, other proppant material, steel, machinery, and
2 mineral and agricultural products and commodities.

3 The volume of rail traffic on the proposed
4 rail line would depend on future market conditions,
5 including demand for crude oil produced in the Uinta
6 Basin. Depending on those market conditions, the
7 Coalition estimates that between approximately 3.68 and
8 approximately 10.52 trains could operate on the
9 proposed rail line each day on average, and that
10 estimate includes both loaded and unloaded trains.

11 The National Environmental Policy Act, or
12 NEPA, requires that federal agencies consider
13 reasonable alternatives to a proposed action. In the
14 case of the Uinta Basin Railway, there are relatively
15 few potential routes for a rail line to take due to the
16 mountainous terrain that surrounds the Uinta Basin.
17 However, OEA identified three reasonable alternatives
18 that would be logistically feasible and practical to
19 construct and operate.

20 In the Draft EIS, these alternatives are
21 referred to as the Action Alternatives. The Action
22 Alternatives are the Indian Canyon Alternative, the
23 Wells Draw Alternative, and the Whitmore Park
24 Alternative. I will present maps of these three Action
25 Alternatives in just a moment. In addition to the

1 Action Alternatives, though, the Draft EIS also
2 considers the potential environmental impacts of the
3 No-Action Alternative, which would occur if the
4 Coalition did not construct and operate the proposed
5 rail line.

6 This map shows the route of the Indian
7 Canyon Alternative. From terminus points near South
8 Myton Bench and Leland Bench, this alternative would
9 extend westward and would then head southwest through
10 Indian Canyon, paralleling Route 191.

11 There would be three tunnels on this route
12 to maintain a safe grade while traversing the mountains
13 that surround the Uinta Basin. South of Indian Canyon,
14 the alternative would head west to a connection with an
15 existing Union Pacific Railroad rail line near Kyune.
16 The Indian Canyon Alternative would be approximately
17 81 miles long, and it would cross land that is owned or
18 managed by the Ute Indian Tribe, the U.S. Forest
19 Service, the State of Utah, and the Bureau of Land
20 Management, as well as private land.

21 The Wells Draw Alternative would also
22 connect two terminus points in the Uinta Basin near
23 South Myton Bench and Leland Bench to the existing
24 Union Pacific rail line near Kyune. This alternative
25 would follow a different route between those end points

1 compared to Indian Canyon Alternative, however. South
2 of Myton, the route would follow Wells Draw toward its
3 head waters and then would turn west into Argyle
4 Canyon.

5 The Wells Draw Alternative would cross very
6 rugged terrain and require 13 tunnels to maintain a
7 safe grade. It would be approximately 103 miles long
8 and would cross land managed by the Bureau of Land
9 Management and the State of Utah, as well as private
10 land.

11 Early in the EIS process, the Coalition
12 developed a new alternative to avoid certain
13 environmental impacts that had been identified. This
14 is the Whitmore Park Alternative. It would be similar
15 to the Indian Canyon Alternative because it would also
16 parallel Route 191 through Indian Canyon. However, to
17 the north and south of Indian Canyon, the Whitmore Park
18 Alternative would follow a different route. To the
19 north, the Whitmore Park Alternative would go around
20 the Duchesne Mini Ranches area of Duchesne County to
21 avoid impacts on residences there.

22 To the South of Indian Canyon, the Whitmore
23 Park Alternative would be located further north
24 compared to the Indian Canyon Alternative and the Wells
25 Draw Alternative in order to avoid or minimize impacts

1 on greater sage-grouse in the Carbon Sage-Grouse
2 Management Area.

3 The Whitmore Park Alternative would have
4 five tunnels and would be approximately 88 miles long.
5 In its request for Board authority to construct and
6 operate the rail line, the Coalition identified the
7 Whitmore Park Alternative as its preferred alternative.

8 I will turn now to a summary of the
9 environmental review process. The first step in the
10 EIS process is scoping. For this project, scoping
11 began on June 19, 2019, when OEA issued a notice of
12 intent to prepare an EIS. During scoping, OEA
13 requested public and agency comments on the
14 alternatives and the topics to be analyzed in the EIS.

15 OEA held six public meetings in the project
16 area as part of scoping. After receiving comments on
17 the scope of study for the EIS, OEA issued a final
18 scope of study in December 2019. Following the end of
19 scoping, OEA prepared the Draft EIS in consultation
20 with the cooperating agencies. The Draft EIS analyzes
21 the potential environmental impacts of the three Action
22 Alternatives. It also sets forth OEA preliminary
23 mitigation measures for addressing those impacts, and
24 it identifies the Whitmore Park Alternative as OEA's
25 preliminary environmentally preferred alternative. The

1 Draft EIS also sets the schedule for the public comment
2 period and the online public meetings. The Draft EIS
3 was published on October 30, 2020.

4 After the end of the public comment period
5 for the Draft EIS, OEA will prepare a final EIS. The
6 final EIS will respond to comments received during the
7 comment period, and it will make OEA final
8 recommendations to the Board, including the final
9 recommended mitigation measures. The Board will then
10 consider the entire record, including OEA's
11 recommendations as it makes its final decision. In its
12 final decision, the Board may decide to deny the
13 Coalition's request for authority to construct and
14 operate the proposed rail line. It may grant authority
15 to construct and operate the proposed rail line, or it
16 may grant authority with conditions, including
17 environmental conditions. If the Board should decide to
18 authorize the proposed rail line, the coalition would
19 then need to obtain rights of way or permits from one or
20 more of the cooperating agencies. Those agencies would
21 then need to decide whether to grant those rights of way
22 or permits. The Draft EIS presents more detailed
23 information about the decisions that the cooperating
24 agencies could make depending on which, if any,
25 alternative is authorized by the Board.

1 Now, I will briefly review some of the
2 major findings and conclusions of the Draft EIS.

3 The Draft EIS analyzed the potential
4 environmental impacts of the proposed rail line across
5 a range of resource areas. These include vehicle
6 safety and delay, rail operation safety, water
7 resources, biological resources, geology, soils,
8 seismic hazards and hazardous waste, noise and
9 vibration, air quality and greenhouse gases, energy,
10 cultural resources, paleontological resources, land use
11 and recreation, visual resources, socioeconomics,
12 environmental justice, and cumulative impacts.

13 The Draft EIS concludes that any of the
14 Action Alternatives would have significant
15 environmental impacts. Any of the Action Alternatives
16 would cross surface waters and wetlands, which would
17 result in unavoidable impacts on water resources.
18 Among the Action Alternatives, the Wells Draw
19 Alternative would permanently affect the largest area
20 of surface waters and wetlands. While the Whitmore
21 Park Alternative would permanently affect the smallest
22 area.

23 Any of the Action Alternatives would also
24 affect vegetation and wildlife, including species that
25 are listed as threatened or endangered under the

1 Endangered Species Act, as well as other species that
2 are managed by federal, state, and tribal agencies.
3 For example, any the Action Alternatives would cross
4 habitat for greater sage-grouse, which is a species
5 that is protected by the Bureau of Land Management and
6 the State of Utah.

7 For this species, the Whitmore Park
8 Alternative would minimize impacts by avoiding
9 sage-grouse lek and summer brood-rearing habitats.

10 The proposed rail line would create noise
11 that could disturb people who live near the proposed
12 rail line. Wayside noise refers to the noise from
13 locomotive engines, as well as from train wheels on
14 rail. Depending on the number of trains that would
15 move on the rail line each day, wayside noise could
16 exceed the Surface Transportation Board's noise impact
17 thresholds at up to six residences for the Indian
18 Canyon Alternative, up to two residents for the
19 Whitmore Park Alternative, and up to one residence for
20 the Wells Draw Alternative.

21 The proposed rail line would have both
22 positive and negative socioeconomic impacts.
23 Beneficial impacts would include creating new jobs
24 during construction and during rail operations, as well
25 as generating tax revenue. Adverse socioeconomic

1 impacts would include the acquisition and displacement
2 of residences and of economic activities, such as
3 ranching or farming.

4 The proposed rail line would affect land
5 uses on public, private, or tribal lands. The effects
6 on land use would depend on the alternative. Any of
7 the Action Alternatives would cross state land and
8 private land. In addition, the Indian Canyon
9 Alternative and the Whitmore Park Alternative would
10 each cross inventoried roadless areas within Ashley
11 National Forest and tribal trust lands within the Ute
12 Indian Tribe's Uintah and Ouray Reservation.

13 The Indian Canyon Alternative and the Wells
14 Draw Alternative would both cross Bureau of Land
15 Management land. And the Wells Draw Alternative would
16 cross parts of the Bureau of Land Management's Lears
17 Canyon area of critical environmental concern, as well
18 as areas with wilderness characteristics.

19 Among many other resource areas, the Draft
20 EIS specifically analyzes areas that OEA learned are of
21 concern to the Ute Indian Tribe, including impacts
22 relating to vehicle safety and delay, rail operations
23 safety, biological resources, air emissions, and
24 cultural resources.

25 Based on OEA's analysis, and in

1 consultation with the cooperating agencies, OEA has
2 preliminarily identified the Whitmore Park Alternative
3 as the environmentally preferred alternative because
4 that action alternative would avoid or minimize
5 environmental impacts compared to the Indian Canyon
6 Alternative and the Wells Draw Alternative. In
7 particular, the Whitmore Park Alternative would avoid
8 or minimize impacts on water resources, greater
9 sage-grouse, and residential areas in the Duchesne Mini
10 Ranches area and the Argyle Canyon area of Duchesne
11 County.

12 For these reasons, OEA is preliminarily
13 recommending that if the Board decides to authorize a
14 proposed rail line, the Board should only authorize the
15 Whitmore Park Alternative to minimize environmental
16 impacts.

17 We welcome your comments on this
18 preliminary recommendation, as well as any of the other
19 conclusions presented in the Draft EIS.

20 If the Board should authorize the proposed
21 rail line, OEA also recommends that the Board impose
22 mitigation measures to mitigate impacts on the
23 environment. The Coalition has proposed 56 voluntary
24 mitigation measures, which are described in Chapter 4
25 of the Draft EIS.

1 In addition to those 56 voluntary
2 mitigation measures, OEA is also recommending an
3 additional 73 preliminary mitigation measures. Those
4 recommended mitigation measures are also set forth in
5 Chapter 4 of the Draft EIS. We welcome your comments
6 on these preliminary mitigation measures with the
7 voluntary mitigation measures and the additional
8 recommended mitigation measures.

9 After considering all public comments on
10 the Draft EIS, OEA will make its final recommendations
11 on mitigation to the Board in the final EIS.

12 Now, I will discuss how you can access the
13 Draft EIS and find more information about the
14 environmental review process.

15 This is a screenshot of the Board-sponsored
16 project website for the EIS. You can find it at
17 www.uintabasinrailwayeis.com, or you can do a search
18 for Uinta Basin Railway Environmental Impact Statement.
19 On this website, the Draft EIS is available for
20 download and you can also view an interactive map of
21 the Action Alternatives on the website and review many
22 project-related documents, including the field surveys
23 that were conducted to support the environmental
24 review.

25 You can also provide your comments on the

1 Draft EIS through this website. To do so, just click
2 on the public involvement page, which provides a link
3 to a comment form and instructions.

4 This is what the comment form looks like.
5 You can type your comment right into the comment box,
6 or you can upload your comment as one or more
7 attachments. The comment box can be used for comments
8 up to 4,000 characters long. If you would like to
9 submit a comment that is longer than 4,000 characters,
10 you can upload your comment in the form of a picture, a
11 word document, a PDF file, or as another format.

12 Another place where you can find
13 information about the proposed project is the Board's
14 website at stb.gov or do a search for the Surface
15 Transportation Board. The Board's website looks like
16 this. To find information about the Uinta
17 Basin Railway Project, you can click on the link that
18 says, "Search STB Records." To do a search on the
19 Board's website, you will need to know the docket
20 number for the case. For the Uinta Basin Railway, the
21 Docket Number is FD 36284 . If you conduct a search
22 for Docket No. FD 36284, you will find filings and
23 decisions about the case. These include the Draft EIS,
24 which was issued on October 30th, as well as the
25 Coalition's petition seeking authority to construct and

1 operate the proposed rail line.

2 The Draft EIS is currently available for
3 public review and comment. The comment period is
4 45 days long. It began on October 30th, 2020, and is
5 scheduled to end on December 14th, 2020. To be
6 considered in the final EIS, therefore, your written
7 comments must be submitted or postmarked by
8 December 14th. You can submit your oral comments at
9 any of the six public meetings that we are holding
10 during the comment period.

11 Due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, all
12 of the public meetings are being held online. The
13 dates and times of the online public meetings are shown
14 on this slide, and information on how to register for a
15 public meeting is available on the Board-sponsored
16 public website at uintabasinrailwayeis.com.

17 Before finishing today's presentation, I
18 would like to briefly review the ways in which you can
19 submit your comments on the Draft EIS. There are
20 several different options for submitting comments and
21 OEA will consider all comments equally, regardless of
22 how you choose to submit them. You may give an oral
23 comment at today's online public meeting or another
24 online public meeting. You can find information about
25 how to register for a meeting at the Board-sponsored

1 project website. Alternatively, you can submit a
2 written comment electronically through the project
3 website. There is also an option of mailing your
4 comment if you prefer. You can send your written
5 comments to me, Joshua Wayland, Surface Transportation
6 Board, c/o ICF, 9300 Lee Highway, Fairfax, Virginia
7 22031, Attention: Environmental Filing Docket No. FD
8 36284. We ask that you please do refer to Docket No.
9 FD 36284 in your mailed comments.

10 This brings us to the end of today's
11 presentation. We really do appreciate your interest in
12 and participation in the Surface Transportation Board's
13 environmental review process for this proposed Uinta
14 Basin Railway Project. We look forward to receiving
15 your comments and continuing to consult with you
16 throughout the remainder of the EIS process. Thank you
17 all very much.

18 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thank you, Josh. We
19 have now reached the second part of the online public
20 meeting, a facilitated comment session. If you have
21 not already registered to provide an oral comment and
22 would like to speak, please send a chat message to the
23 meeting host or raise your hand using the raise hand
24 icon if you are on Zoom, or for call-in only users
25 press star 9 to raise your hand and we will add you to

1 the commenter list.

2 We will call on you if time allows after
3 those who have preregistered have made their comments.
4 As a reminder, each commenter will have three minutes
5 to make their comments. At the start of your comments
6 please state your full name for the record.

7 Ladies and gentlemen, our first speaker is
8 William Reese. William Reese.

9 Okay. I'm seeing a hand raised from one of
10 our call-in users. I am going to ask call-in user
11 ending in 4910 to unmute in case this is William Reese,
12 our first preregistered speaker.

13 MR. FORDHAM: Hi, this is actually Darrell
14 Fordham.

15 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Hi, Darrell.

16 MR. FORDHAM: Not William Reese.

17 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: No worries. I will add
18 you to the speaker list.

19 MR. FORDHAM: Thanks.

20 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Okay. I see another
21 user identified as "My PC." I am going to ask you to
22 unmute in case this is William Reese. User identified
23 as "My PC" you're unmuted. Is this William Reese?

24 Okay. And participant identified as "My
25 PC," if you are -- you are unmuted, but if you're

1 speaking, we cannot hear you. Okay. Not seeing
2 Mr. Reese on the line. Our next registered speaker is
3 Karen Headland.

4 Ms. Headland, I'm going to ask you to
5 unmute.

6 MS. HEADLAND: Thank you, Jennifer. Can
7 you hear me?

8 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: I can. Please go ahead.
9 You have three minutes.

10 MS. HEADLAND: Thank you. And I want to
11 thank Mr. Wayland for an excellent presentation. I
12 have two questions. And by way of background, I'm a
13 former chief counsel and deputy administrator of the
14 Federal Railroad Administration during the Obama
15 administration.

16 My first question -- and I'll give you the
17 both of the questions. The first question is: Why was
18 FRA not a cooperating agency for the DEIS?

19 The second question is a little longer.
20 And that is: It has been reported that the Uinta Basin
21 Railway is negotiating to acquire -- acquire rights in
22 the Union Pacific line currently unused between Dotsero
23 and Pueblo. That line is actually shown on one of the
24 maps in the DEIS.

25 Do you -- are you aware of what the status

1 of those negotiations are? And why was that route not
2 considered when you looked at down rail impacts?

3 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Okay. Thank you for
4 your comments. Ms. Headland, you have another two
5 minutes. Would you like to expand on your comments at
6 all?

7 MS. HEADLAND: No. Not at all. Thank you.

8 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Okay. Thank you for
9 your comments.

10 Ladies and gentlemen, our next registered
11 speaker, and I apologize if I mispronounce your name,
12 is Malin Moench. I am going to ask you to unmute.

13 MR. MOENCH: Okay, can you hear me?

14 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: I can go ahead. You
15 have three minutes.

16 MR. MOENCH: So that last name is a German
17 name I don't even know how to pronounce, but it's Malin
18 Moench in America.

19 I am a lawyer and an economist. And I am
20 speaking for Utah Physicians for a Healthy Environment.

21 My main point is that the analysis of the
22 No-Action Alternative in this draft EIS is woefully
23 inadequate. This EIS confines itself to analyzing the
24 environmental impact of building or not building the
25 Uinta Basin Railway itself, while ignoring the expected

1 tripling or quadrupling of oil and gas production that
2 its proponents say it will trigger. This is like doing
3 risk analysis for the Titanic asking whether the dance
4 band will play or not play while ignoring that the ship
5 is steaming toward a looming iceberg.

6 In this case, the looming iceberg is the
7 EPA's National Ambient air quality 8-hour standard for
8 ozone. The Uinta Basin is already a nonattainment area
9 for ozone, often reaching concentrations in winter that
10 exceed peak 8-hour levels in the Los Angeles Basin.

11 The 2014 Uinta Basin winter ozone studies
12 point out that these high concentrations of ozone form
13 when VOCs and nitrous oxide are trapped in pools of
14 cold air and are exposed to ultra violet light
15 reflected off snow. These studies point out that the
16 oil and gas operations are responsible for 99 percent
17 of VOC emissions in the basin and nearly 60 percent of
18 nitrous oxide emissions.

19 They say that the only way to bring the
20 basin there into compliance with the clear act ozone
21 standard is to cut down on the ozone precursors. Even
22 though the basin is a ozone nonattainment area, the BLM
23 has already approved leases that allow the basin two
24 main oil and gas operators, Encana and Crescent Point,
25 to double their fueling and production levels. This

1 railway is expected to result in another doubling of
2 oil and gas production beyond those. The cumulative
3 effect will be a quadrupling of production and
4 logically of ozone precursor emissions. The Biden-led
5 EPA can be expected to get back to enforcing the Clean
6 Air Act after a four-year hiatus. It will require any
7 oil and gas expansion projects to get nonattainment
8 resource review permits under an EPA state
9 implementation plan.

10 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thirty seconds
11 remaining.

12 MR. MOENCH: NEPA requires of an EIS
13 to analyze indirect and not just direct impacts of a
14 project on a region's airshed. It also requires an EIS
15 to analyze cumulative effect of a project, not just the
16 isolated impact. And this EIS doesn't do either.

17 If it had analyzed the indirect and
18 cumulative effect of the Uinta Basin Railway on the
19 basin's ozone levels, it would show that it would make
20 compliance for the 8-hour ozone standard impossible
21 going forward. Its failure to undertake such an
22 analysis makes it legally infirm. And that concludes
23 my statement.

24 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thank you for your
25 comments.

1 Our next speaker this evening is Melissa
2 Peck. Melissa Peck, I'm not seeing you on the Zoom
3 meeting this evening. I do see a hand raised. Call-in
4 user 3994 I am going to ask you to unmute to see if
5 this is Mrs. Peck.

6 MS. PECK: Hi, can you hear me?

7 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: I can hear you. Is this
8 Melissa Peck?

9 MS. PECK: Yes.

10 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Great. You have three
11 minutes.

12 MS. PECK: Thank you. My name is Melissa
13 Peck, and I am a member of the off grid-gated community
14 in Argyle Canyon. We've been an off-grid gated
15 community for over 50 years. It's a private area.
16 None of us are wealthy people up there, but we do
17 really love our peace and quiet and nature and
18 everything. We have five game cameras, and we capture
19 everything from bears, deer, elk, moose. We had a
20 neighbor even capture a picture of wandering Buffalo,
21 if you can believe that. But we've had forest grouse
22 and sage-grouse. And that threatens them because
23 because I know they -- they got rid of the -- the route
24 that was going through Colorado because of their
25 sage-grouse breeding grounds. Well, the Whitmore and

1 Emma Park area is the same -- the Craig South, and
2 there is sage-grouse down there, too. So I don't know
3 where the study got that from that they are going to be
4 impacting less sage-grouse because that's not true.

5 So something else that I would like to
6 point out is they are under estimating the cost of this
7 project because they just added a second tunnel to the
8 Whitmore line, I guess, if that's what you call it.
9 And the cost is going to be enormous, not to mention
10 the footprint. The footprint, I am really concerned
11 about and is for a construction company and we do
12 excavation and mining and things like that. And so we
13 are very aware of what it takes to make a tunnel. And
14 all the drilling, the blasting, the amount of soil and
15 dirt to come out of the mountain.

16 It can be scary because you can run into
17 pockets of gas. This is carbon country. And there
18 is -- just a neighbor drilling his well ran into two
19 pockets of gas. There is a lot of potential for danger
20 and fire. We have -- a lot of our water in that area
21 is very scarce already. And so we have a few springs
22 and small creeks, and those will be affected.

23 The footprint for construction, they are
24 going to want to take out our private gate that has
25 been there for 50 years. It is grandfathered in. So

1 that's a legal concern of mine.

2 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thirty seconds
3 remaining.

4 MS. PECK: Too, the footprint and all the
5 construction is going to scar this area for years to
6 come, for decades to come. Right now we have roads
7 that are not two-lane roads, they are just dirt roads.
8 The county does not give us any services whatsoever, no
9 plowing, no grading, no garbage, no anything. And this
10 is really going to devastate this population, and it's
11 awful. I'm worried that the reason they got rid of the
12 Craig route is because it was not a real legitimate
13 route to begin with and they just really -- oh, and the
14 last thing is the reason that the oil companies are not
15 putting any money into this, is because this has been
16 attempted with the highway and they run out of money.

17 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Time.

18 MS. PECK: And they don't want to be on the
19 hook for it and so it goes nowhere.

20 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thank you for your
21 comments.

22 Our next speaker this evening is Roger
23 peck. Okay, Melissa Peck, I see your hand is raised.
24 I am going to ask you to unmute.

25 MS. PECK: Can you hear me?

1 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Yes. You are unmuted.

2 MS. PECK: Okay. Roger Peck is my husband
3 is Roger and is ill this evening and will not be
4 participating.

5 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Okay. Thank you so
6 much.

7 MS. PECK: Thank you.

8 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Okay our next speaker is
9 Teri Durfee. I am going to ask you to unmute.

10 MS. DURFEE: Can you hear me?

11 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: I can. Go ahead. You
12 have three minutes.

13 MS. DURFEE: Okay. Great. My name is Teri
14 Durfee, and I oppose this being put through. I don't
15 believe that public money should be spent on this
16 railway at all. And I think there should be
17 consideration on the EIS about the increased production
18 of fossil fuels that will be created by having this
19 railway in. And so it should be considered in the
20 proposal because only focusing on the railway itself,
21 it does not account for the impact that all of the
22 increased exploration and drilling and all of the
23 impacts of the fossil fuel on the environment.

24 Also, in the Uinta Basin, it's already very
25 polluted. In the winter they have a lot of fog which

1 only keeps that in. And by allowing this railway, it
2 would increase the air pollution, which is already
3 beyond the federal standards. And it's already
4 poisoning the Uinta Basin's air and water and harming
5 the wildlife. So by adding the railway and increasing
6 the production, it's only going to make things worse.

7 Also, the big game habitat. I'm worried
8 about the animals that will be affected by this because
9 having the railway go through will permanently change
10 the landscape. And it would disturb the wildlife
11 because each if you're just using the train, I mean,
12 you have the noise, you have diesel smoke. And also
13 there's a chance for derailments. And the biggest one
14 of spills is of a huge concern, also a chance for
15 wildfires. It's been extremely dry and the sparks that
16 could be created from the train could definitely spark
17 wildfires.

18 And so it is a huge threat to the community
19 and the wildlife. And it's also damaging to the water,
20 besides the impact of the actual railway on the water,
21 there would also -- because of the increased production
22 of the fossil fuels it would also --

23 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thirty seconds
24 remaining.

25 COURT REPORTER: Okay. It would also

1 threaten the Colorado River and the wildlife. And it
2 is already -- the flows have already been reduced in
3 the area because of the drought. And so it would only
4 harm those areas even further. Thank you.

5 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thank you for your
6 comments.

7 Our next speaker this evening is Reed Page.
8 I am going to ask you to unmute.

9 MR. PAGE: And unmuted. Good to go
10 Jennifer?

11 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Yes, I can hear you.
12 You have three minutes.

13 MR. PAGE: Thank you so much. Hello, my
14 name is Reed Joseph Page. I am an energy industry
15 professional of the Uinta Basin. That is to say I grew
16 up in the Uinta Basin and virtually all of my family
17 and friends still live there. Although, I now live in
18 the Wasatch Front. I am the director of marketing
19 operations for Summit Energy, a regional natural gas
20 marketing and trade company with commercial activity
21 throughout the Uinta Basin, eastern Utah and the
22 Rockies.

23 The sister companies include oil marketing
24 and district water management and various other oil
25 field activities.

1 I also offer professional services
2 independently as an energy markets consultant providing
3 market analysis and commentary.

4 Today my comments and opinions are my own,
5 and do not represent the opinions of Summit Energy or
6 its affiliates.

7 I would like to express my strong approval
8 and support for the Uinta Basin Railway Project.

9 Access to the national rail system is the only path to
10 allowing basin communities to finally participate in
11 global markets and having any chance of diversifying
12 the local economy away from primary dependents on
13 extracted industries.

14 While I acknowledge that for at least the
15 first decade of operation, the majority of the value
16 moved by rail, will be derived from crude oil and
17 related products. Admittedly, the total opposite of
18 economic diversification. The presence of rail service
19 will finally allow for other commercial opportunities
20 in agriculture and manufacturing.

21 A global transition away from a
22 fossil-based economy is inevitable. The timing of it
23 is entirely up for debate. I am, in fact, supporting
24 of the coming energy transition and recognize that the
25 global decarbonization is a necessary and inevitable

1 step to human progress and even long term survival. I
2 believe that this railroad will and can be viable
3 subject still shipper commitments and will provide a
4 healthy return for its investor during of the first
5 20 years of operation and likely beyond. But during
6 that time frame, the railroad operator has every
7 incentive to diversify its customer base to include
8 shippers is to encourage many other uses for an asset
9 that will continue to serve the Uinta Basin long after
10 our last barrel is produced.

11 A just transition will not be possible
12 without the Uinta Basin Railway. Any stated wishes for
13 a just a transition, or the basin, while denying the
14 key necessary component for such a transition would be
15 disingenuous. My support for the railroad is subject,
16 however, to the conditions and operations are --

17 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: 30 seconds remaining.

18 MR. PAGE: Performed in a way that will
19 minimize environmental and community impacts. I am not
20 a biologist or ecologist and must defer to the
21 judgement of those professionals involved in the
22 approval of this project. I hope to see my home
23 flourish and grow possibly to return one day for more
24 than just a visit. Thank you.

25 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thank you for your

1 comments.

2 Our next speaker this evening is Donald
3 Jex. I am going to ask you to unmute.

4 MR. JEX: Hi, Jennifer, can you hear me
5 okay?

6 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: I can hear you just
7 fine. You have three minutes.

8 MR. JEX: Great. I only -- I have a couple
9 of concerns that I don't feel have been adequately
10 addressed by the draft copy of the EIS. First of all,
11 from an economic standpoint I appreciate the residents
12 of the Uinta Basin in wanting to have this type of
13 economic opportunity for their residents. However, the
14 numbers that I've seen, and I'm a tax accountant and a
15 rural agent for the internal revenue service. The
16 numbers I've seen do not justify the cost that it's
17 going to take to put in this rail line and maintain it
18 after the fact. So that's my first objection to this
19 rail line even being considered at this time.

20 The second concern I have basically are the
21 statements, many of the statements made in the
22 environmental impact statement that the opinions of
23 those who have drafted this environmental impact
24 statement are for the most part not residents of the
25 area. They don't have to deal with the long term

1 effects of this rail line. They don't have to worry
2 about the tax implications for property and other
3 taxes. They are going to affect the residents of this
4 county and this area should the production of oil not
5 raise the level that they're anticipating.

6 Thirdly, the impact on the ground water
7 and -- by the way, my wife and I are property owners in
8 upper Argyle Canyon. Our property is located about a
9 mile below where the rail line would be run on the
10 Whitmore route. The ground water up there is going to
11 be substantially affected by the drilling of the tunnel
12 through that part of the canyon. Because not only the
13 winter runoff but the spring rains and so on feed
14 Argyle Creek, which goes all the way down to 9-Mile
15 Highway. And if that moisture stream is interrupted,
16 that's going to have a disastrous affect of the ecology
17 of the canyon.

18 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thirty seconds
19 remaining.

20 MR. JEX: Thank you. Lastly, my last
21 concern with the effects of the Church Camp Fire set
22 six or seven or eight years ago. We are still
23 recovering from the effects of that fire. Introducing
24 a spark-generating rail line in the top part of that
25 canyon is going to be disastrous. And there is no way

1 that anybody can guarantee that fires will not be an
2 issue with the route that the rail line is taking
3 through the foliage in that canyon.

4 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Time.

5 MR. JEX: Thank you very much. I
6 appreciate the time to speak.

7 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thank you for your
8 comments.

9 Our next speaker is James Robinson.

10 MR. ROBINSON: Yes, hello. This is James.
11 Can you hear me?

12 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: I can hear you. You
13 have three minutes.

14 MR. ROBINSON: Thank you. I don't think
15 I'll need that much time. I'd like to echo the
16 comments of Reed Page. I agree as a resident of the
17 Uinta Basin currently involved in an industry not
18 related to fossil fuel exploration. I see a benefit
19 for having rail services in the basin to increase our
20 economic diversity in the long run.

21 I do understand that in the short term
22 fossil fuel growth will increase as that is one of the
23 major driving factors for getting the railway started
24 out here in the basin. But I look forward to the
25 opportunity to grow different industries in the basin

1 in the long run to a period of time when we move away
2 from our dependance on fossil fuel exploration as the
3 primary economic driver in the basin.

4 As the saying, I've heard out here several
5 times, we live and die by the price of crude in the
6 basin. So I look forward to seeing that be less true.
7 Not that I don't support all industry in some regards,
8 but I -- I would also like to remind everybody that the
9 amount of heavy truck traffic that is currently moving
10 through the basin also contributes to particulate
11 emissions. And the engines on diesel trains are highly
12 efficient and very clean as compared to most
13 freight-moving trucks.

14 That's all I have to say. Thank you very
15 much.

16 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thank you for your
17 comments.

18 Our next commenter is Carl Robinson. Carl
19 Robinson, I'm not seeing you on the Zoom webinar. If
20 you're a call-in user, please press star 9 to raise
21 your hand so I can identify you. Carl Robinson? Not
22 seeing any hands raised.

23 Our next registered commenter is John Doe.
24 John Doe, if you're on the phone -- if you're on the
25 webinar please raise your hand. Or if you are a

1 call-in user, please press star 9 to raise your hand.

2 John Doe?

3 Not seeing any hands. Our next registered
4 speaker is Kerry Farrer, which I believe is on the
5 Zoom. I am going to ask you to unmute.

6 MR. FARRER: Can you hear me?

7 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: I can. Go ahead you
8 have three minutes.

9 My name is Kerry Farrer. I am an
10 owner/operator K&B Contracting. I'm a resident here in
11 the basin. I also own a nonprofit that helps run the
12 Utah athletics programs here in the basin. And I am
13 head -- one of the head moderators of the American
14 Nine, there is a group. They are about 4,000 members.
15 A majority of them live local here in the greater basin
16 area.

17 I am in agreeance [sic] with the railroad.
18 For one, I believe that the EIS -- that the members of
19 the EIS are professionals. I think they know what
20 they're doing. And I believe that this is something
21 that we need. It's no secret that the basin has been
22 stagnant since before Covid-19. Industry-wise, we need
23 some sustainability and not just the oil field, but a
24 window to get other industries in here to get growth.

25 For example, if I can get a car skipped on

1 rail from Maine to Salt Lake for \$500 but I have to pay
2 a truck to haul it from Salt Lake City to Roosevelt for
3 \$1500. And when it comes to stuff like that, this
4 railway is going to open up the window for a lot of
5 small businesses.

6 You're going to get rid of the big
7 corporate thumb that's on the neck of everybody out
8 here, running, you know, keeping us -- you know, all
9 our prices at a certain -- and the complication that we
10 can't compete with them.

11 I believe that this rail is a safer means
12 of transportation. I've grown up here most of my life.
13 If I grow up part of my life in Alaska, and so I know
14 about pipelines. And so I know the hazards of
15 pipelines and how they go in. And you read about those
16 breaking. And they're -- very, very seldom hear
17 anything about a car -- a railcar derailling and
18 spilling oil everywhere. And when a pipeline breaks,
19 it empties the pipeline on the ground. I think this
20 will be one of the best alternatives that we can have.
21 I agree with -- the truck traffic is part of that.
22 From living here, you can see when the air quality goes
23 bad out here it's usually when the wind blows in from
24 Salt Lake City.

25 The opportunities that it's going to bring

1 for growth, we need them. And I would ask that, you
2 know, the people in charge don't let people that don't
3 live here dictate how we need to grow or need to live.
4 I don't believe that someone that has a vacation home
5 should be able to come out here and say, "Hey, you
6 guys, you can't do this," you know? We got people that
7 have been suffering, struggling. We have companies
8 that can't even -- that spent millions of dollars to
9 help the environment to help local businesses.

10 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thirty seconds
11 remaining.

12 MR. FARRER: And all that goes away when
13 the work goes down. This gives us the opportunity for
14 growth, not just in the oil industry, but in other
15 industries. And I think that this is something that we
16 need, and I am a big advocate for this. I hope that
17 this comes through. And I hope that, you know, we can
18 find the safest route. We can find -- but work in
19 agreeance [sic] with most people that -- you know, not
20 disturb other people. And hopefully it's something
21 that we can make up. That's all I got. So --

22 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thank you for your
23 comments. Our next registered speaker is Pamela
24 Underwood. I do see a Pamela on the line. I am going
25 to ask Pamela to unmute to see if this is Pamela

1 Underwood.

2 Pamela I've asked you to unmute. Pamela,
3 are you able to unmute? Okay. Pamela, if this is
4 Pamela Underwood, it doesn't appear that you're able to
5 unmute. If you would just raise your hand if you would
6 like to still make a comment or send me a chat message
7 or perhaps call back in into the toll-free line, the
8 877-853-5247, Meeting ID 874-8149-6515. Password,
9 0649357.

10 Okay. Our next registered speaker is Jean
11 Mold. I'm going to ask you to unmute.

12 MS. MOLD: Hello.

13 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Hi, I can hear you. You
14 have three minutes.

15 MS. MOLD: Okay. Thank you. I am resident
16 of the Uinta Basin and a landowner there in Argyle
17 area. And so I have pros and cons for both.

18 You know, I'm a strong believer in economic
19 development in the Uinta Basin because I understand the
20 economy here needs help. I understand that we need
21 long-term solutions. I understand all of that because
22 I live here. And I've work closely with the oil and
23 gas industry over the years, and so I understand those
24 dynamics. But as a property owner in Argyle, I have a
25 lot of concerns about the routes being proposed. So I

1 am not opposed to the railway per se, but I am opposed
2 to the routes. Because, you know, I hear comments that
3 they are just weekend cabin places or they are
4 wilderness area or they are unusable land. But coming
5 through Indian Canyon and up into Argyle is a beautiful
6 ride and a drive and that will be all disturbed and
7 that will all change. And then as you come up into the
8 Argyle area, it is a heavily-wooded area with a lot of
9 springs and ponds and water wells. And I am very
10 concerned about how the water will be affected. I'm
11 very concerned about the fire potential because it is a
12 heavily-wooded area. And I've not seen any plans or
13 comments on the mitigation of fire prevention. And
14 because it is so heavily wooded, that when fires have
15 started in the past, they do a lot of damage in a short
16 amount of time. So I am very concerned about that with
17 the railway.

18 I'm concerned about the air quality, the
19 noise pollution. I mean, that's what we are going to
20 hear when we are in that area. Everyone has invested a
21 lot of time and energy in building the spots that they
22 can take their family. And I think that has been even
23 more relevant during these Covid times to see how
24 important those places are to our families. And the
25 privacy -- I am concerned that the privacy will be lost

1 with the railway coming in. The tunnel impact is huge.
2 Because we all know that that kind of construction will
3 disrupt more likely than not the water, the wildlife,
4 the movement of everything up there. I've tried to get
5 detailed maps on exactly where the proposed routes come
6 through, which landowners are affected and what areas
7 and what waters are affected.

8 Everything is pretty vague. I have not
9 been able to get real concrete, pinpoint answers. And
10 I know those things are still being worked on, but
11 those are my concerns. I understand the long term. We
12 need to do long term economic development for the Uinta
13 Basin. I agree with that.

14 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thirty seconds
15 remaining.

16 MS. MOLD: I do -- I am unclear. You know,
17 we keep saying if we can have the railway in the Uinta
18 Basin it will open up our economy and solve our
19 problems, but I sometimes wonder. Because Price, Utah
20 has a railway goes right through it and their economy
21 struggles, too. And so what will be the difference
22 that the railway will provide for us if the oil and gas
23 industry is slowed down with that incoming, you know,
24 government administration?

25 So, those are my concerns. Again, I'm

1 proeconomic development. I just am not in support of
2 these route proposals.

3 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thank you for your
4 comments.

5 Our next speaker this evening is Darrell
6 Fordham.

7 MR. FORDHAM: Hi, thank you. My name is
8 Darrell Fordham. I've participated in each of the five
9 prior online public comment meetings. I've listened to
10 many who are in support of this project and listened to
11 many more who are opposed to it. Those who are in
12 favor of it have touted economic growth and a
13 Field-of-Dreams mentality, that somehow if we build it
14 all of the Uinta Basin's economic woes will be a thing
15 of the past.

16 I also note that no one who has spoken in
17 favor of the project stands to lose anything. It is
18 easy to support a project that doesn't directly
19 negatively affect you or impact your own property, way
20 of life, happiness or quiet enjoyment. So many who
21 have spoken in favor of the project have stated that
22 they are life-long Uinta Basin residents. What I find
23 curious is that these same individuals, while touting
24 alleged economic growth and falsely claiming that all
25 sorts of diverse industries will move into the area if

1 the railway is built, at the same time deride,
2 disparage and belittle anyone who does not live in the
3 basin, even going so far as to say that anyone who is
4 not a full-time Uinta Basin resident doesn't deserve to
5 have a say in this project and should "get lost."

6 How are you going to attract new businesses
7 and the required influx of population with such an
8 attitude of people you label as outsiders? How many of
9 you who support this project have actually read the
10 draft EIS? Did you skip over Chapter 6? Or are you
11 just simply choosing to ignore it completely?

12 Chapter 6 identifies the short-term and the
13 long-term affects of this project, most of which are
14 identified as being irreversible. Some of these
15 include permanent lands, productivity losses for public
16 recreation, wildlife habitat, agriculture and grazing,
17 including permanent loss of irrigated crop lands and
18 severance of private land parcels. Permanent reduction
19 of water resources due to water use during construction
20 and permanent operations, permanent loss of wetland
21 functions and values, permanent alteration of surface
22 water flow and flood plains needed to convey flood
23 waters due to as many as 506 the stream crossings and
24 as many as 59 stream realignments.

25 Short- and long-term impacts on vegetation,

1 fish and wildlife resources, habitat loss, alteration
2 and fragmentation for wildlife resulting in an
3 increased mortality, barriers to wildlife movement,
4 impacts on fish populations and decreases in breeding
5 success.

6 Permanent loss of existing habitat to a
7 number of animal and plant species, including many
8 federal endangered species, irretrievable commitment of
9 materials to build the track structure, irretrievable
10 commitment of ground water and surface water resources,
11 irreversible changes to wetlands, irreversible removal
12 and alteration of vegetation and wildlife habitat.

13 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thirty seconds.

14 MR. FORDHAM: Increased accessibility to
15 wind and water erosion and irreversible loss of soil
16 product activity, irreversible use of nonrenewable
17 fossil fuels, irreversible loss of cultural resources
18 to include archeological sites, tribal resources and
19 build resources, irreversible loss of scientifically
20 important fossils and paleontological resources,
21 permanent and irreversible negative changes to the
22 permanent landscape, permanent and irreversible
23 negative changes to the visual quality of the
24 surrounding rural landscape.

25 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Time.

1 MR. FORDHAM: I have more, but I'll
2 suspend.

3 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thank you for your
4 comments.

5 Okay. Ladies and gentlemen if Reese --
6 William Reese, Carl Robinson, John Doe or Pamela
7 Underwood have joined the meeting or are a call-in
8 user, please raise your hand, send me a chat message or
9 press star 9 to identify yourself.

10 "My PC," I see your hand is raised. I am
11 going to ask you to unmute to see if you are one of
12 those four speakers. And "My PC," I've asked you to
13 unmute. "My PC," it shows that you're still muted. If
14 you're able to unmute on your end, I've asked you to
15 unmute.

16 Okay. Mr. Fordham, I also see that your
17 name is raised. I will add you back to the speaker
18 list as time permits.

19 Okay. Our next speaker is AJ Kendall. I
20 am going to ask you to unmute.

21 MR. KENDALL: Can you hear me?

22 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: I can hear you. You
23 have three minutes.

24 MR. KENDALL: Okay. I don't know if I have
25 three minutes worth of stuff to say.

1 I just got on this meeting tonight just to
2 listen, but I'm surprised to hear that so many people
3 are against the railway. Just from what I've seen of
4 this area over the years that it's very boom-and-bust
5 with oil, and I think it's kind of silly that a
6 railroad hasn't been constructed. I think it could
7 have been used 40 years ago. I think it would have
8 been the best thing for this area, and it would have
9 helped it grow and there would be different industries
10 here. And people wouldn't struggle so much when oil's
11 down because things would have been able to happen that
12 have not happened.

13 I think that it would be foolish for us to
14 not try to get this railroad here. I think it would
15 open up a ton of communities. Shipping would be a lot
16 cheaper. People could start manufacturing stuff here
17 in the basin and ship it out at a competitive price. I
18 think the semitrucks are -- on the highways, those are
19 dangerous, a lot of pollution. And I think the
20 railroad would have paid for itself and would have been
21 a great thing to do years ago.

22 I think some people might be kind of afraid
23 of change or have fear of the unknown and they worry
24 that a railroad might be noisy or cause fires or
25 something, but I'm pretty sure -- I feel like they're

1 not that dangerous. I think it would only help the
2 Uinta Basin a lot, but -- let's see.

3 Yeah. I think that's about all I have to
4 say.

5 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Okay. Thank you for
6 your comments.

7 Okay our next speaker is Cambria Redmond.
8 I am going to ask you to unmute.

9 MS. REDMOND: Hello, can you hear me?

10 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: We can hear you. Go
11 ahead you have three minutes.

12 So, my name is Cambria Redmond and I am a
13 senior undergraduate studying at Metropolitan State,
14 Denver. So, I'm currently in Colorado, but I'm a Utah
15 native. I am studying integrative healthcare and
16 biology. So I propose No-Action. Woefully inadequate
17 is all too correct of a statement. There is no
18 assurance that there will be a movement towards
19 decarbonization for use with this rail line as well as
20 this is a privately funded project. So public use is
21 not assured or intended.

22 So diversification of markets is minimal.
23 I think that if there was any possible way of
24 construction, assurance that movement towards
25 decarbonization and a movement towards more sustainable

1 markets, energy production, such as wind turbines or
2 solar energy, could provide even more jobs than
3 traditional coal or gas and minimize ecological
4 impacts.

5 There really is no reason that we should be
6 continually investing in a market that will not sustain
7 our generations from here on out. That's really it.
8 All of the ecological impacts have been mentioned by
9 others. And there is no possible way that a private
10 company should have the say on people's private or
11 public national lands. That's really it.

12 For the well-being of our children, if we
13 wish to have any in the next coming generations. And
14 the lands of the Uinta Basin just because there is so
15 much natural gas does not mean that we should be using
16 it. There is better ways. Thank you so much.

17 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thank you for your
18 comments.

19 Okay, our next speaker is Julie Jex. I am
20 going to ask you to unmute.

21 MS. JEX: Thank you. Can you hear me?

22 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: I can hear you. You
23 have three minutes.

24 MS. JEX: Great. I would like to go on
25 record as opposing the current three lines that are

1 suggested, especially the Whitmore and the Indian
2 Canyon and the Wells Draw. It's been my observation as
3 a long-term resident of Utah. And I must say I grew up
4 in southern Utah where water is scarce. And we -- I
5 lived in an area where they thought that they -- if
6 they brought in a pig farm, it was going to solve
7 everybody's problems, but there were many, many
8 unintended consequences from that. And the pig farm
9 isn't doing quite as well as they thought it was going
10 to do.

11 So I need to state that, first of all, the
12 county commission would have to subcontract the railway
13 to a private company to maintain and run, et cetera.
14 That would cost tax payer dollars.

15 The seven counties involved are rural
16 counties, and cannot afford to do that if the economy,
17 as we are seeing, is taking a downturn. If the good
18 folks of Duchesne and the Uinta Basin want to bring in
19 new industry, if they're thinking about manufacturing,
20 that's going to add to the pollution. It's also -- I
21 don't know what other industry that they're talking
22 about other than agricultural or the -- the wind
23 production.

24 I need to go also on record as stating that
25 we do not oppose the railway. We just don't like it

1 going through any part of Argyle Canyon.

2 Private property in Utah is at ten percent
3 the last report I saw. Everything else is owned by
4 state and federal governments. And so, this is a very
5 high commodity to have any type of private property.
6 And so those of us who have scrimped and saved to have
7 a little piece in Argyle Canyon feel very passionate
8 about this. We paid just as many taxes for the library
9 and the schools in Duchesne as the good folks in
10 Duchesne County, but we get no services for those
11 taxes.

12 I have to also agree with Mr. Moench, I
13 guess, that the EIS study is very inadequate. You're
14 willing to --

15 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thirty seconds.

16 MS. JEX: -- go around the Mini Ranches but
17 not any other private property. If production is down
18 in the basin, truck travel is going to go down,
19 therefore pollution will go down.

20 All of this EIS is on speculation. And I
21 have to say that we cannot afford economically for this
22 project to go through. So I would say please deny this
23 project. Thank you.

24 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thank you for your
25 comments.

1 Okay our next speaker is under the name "My
2 PC." I'm going to try to unmute you again and see if
3 we can have success. "My PC," I'm going to ask you to
4 unmute. Okay, "My PC," I've asked you to unmute. And
5 it doesn't appear to be -- it didn't appear that you're
6 able to unmute. If you would please, call in, at
7 877-853-5247, Meeting ID 874-8149-6515, Password:
8 05649357.

9 Okay. I see another hand raised with
10 call-in user ending in 0920. I am going to ask you to
11 unmute.

12 MR. EVANS: Hi, my name is Steve Evans. I
13 have owned and operated radio stations in the Uinta
14 Basin for over 25 years. I have also served on many
15 community service organizations, including president of
16 the Vernal Area Chamber of Commerce.

17 These experiences have provided me the
18 opportunity to consult with numerous local retail
19 businesses owners about the economic challenges that
20 they face. The Uinta Basin is the most -- one of the
21 most challenged -- is the most challenging place to do
22 business in the State of Utah. This is due to the
23 cyclical nature of the extraction industry, which is
24 the primary source of local jobs here. Although we
25 have huge amounts of energy resources under our feet,

1 producers are limited due to the inability to transport
2 product to market. Additionally, they are limited to
3 selling the product to just the North Salt Lake
4 refineries to monopolize prizes by placing big
5 discounts of Uinta Basin goods. Proposed railways will
6 not influence the market price of oil. However, it
7 will put crude exported from the Uinta Basin in a
8 competitive market environment and help stabilize the
9 industry. The Uinta railway would allow producers the
10 ability to transport to a national and international
11 markets, thereby allowing the free capital system to
12 work by creating a competitive bid for energy produced
13 in the Uinta Basin.

14 It should be noted here that Utah's
15 population is expected to double by the year 2050.
16 Communities along the Wasatch Front, Salt Lake City,
17 Ogden and Provo are already struggling with
18 unprecedented growth this past decade. There simply is
19 not enough room along the Wasatch Front to meet the
20 projected demand. The Uinta Basin however, has an able
21 workforce with room to grow.

22 The Uinta Basin would provide a means to
23 expand and diversify our local economy by creating jobs
24 and through mineral lease monies and other taxes, a
25 means to build a local infrastructure to meet the

1 forecasted state growth. With the ability to transport
2 goods and services via rail, our economic development
3 offices would then be able to market this growth toward
4 the Uinta Basin where we would have the workforce,
5 transportation and affordable land.

6 With the stable economy comes more stable
7 families. With this last phase of energy layoff,
8 hundreds of families from throughout the Uinta Basin
9 have been separated from the family's primary
10 bread-winner and have been forced to leave home to work
11 a 10-on and 10-off shift in another energy producing
12 state. Local crime statistics conclude, when there is
13 a down turn in the local economy --

14 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thirty seconds.

15 MR. EVANS: -- crimes involving substance
16 abuse, domestic violence, juvenile truancy increases.
17 Uinta railway, in my opinion, will help mitigate those
18 social problems by creating economic diversity and the
19 development of local jobs. Thank you for your
20 consideration. Those are my comments.

21 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thank you for your
22 comments.

23 Okay, user "My PC," I see your hand is
24 raised. I am going to try to unmute you again. My PC
25 you're unmuted. Can you hear me? User identified as

1 "my PC," you are unmuted.

2 Okay. I see we have a hand raised caller
3 with 3994. I am going to ask you to unmute.

4 MS. PECK: Hi. Can you hear me?

5 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Yes. You're kind of
6 soft. If you can get a little closer to your phone.

7 MS. PECK: I am sorry, I'm driving. My
8 husband is Roger peck. And he's ill but he wants to
9 make a few points.

10 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Go ahead. You have
11 three minutes, and can you please state your name for
12 the record.

13 MS. PECK: Melissa Peck for Roger Peck.

14 He wanted to bring up is that the SCIC is
15 pushing so hard right now to get this finalized before
16 the end of the year because President Trump is still in
17 office. If a new president is elected that is not
18 President Trump, then (inaudible) will be drastically
19 reduced and that makes this project a very unwise and
20 unsafe investment.

21 None of the oil companies are investing in
22 this project because they don't want to be on the hook
23 for the billions of dollars it is going to take to
24 finish this railroad.

25 Another concern because of that is that the

1 railroad will never be finished and all of the
2 environmental impacts will go ahead and be permanently
3 done and yet the railroad will still not be finished.

4 He also wants everyone to know that we are
5 a member of the Argyle Wilderness Preservation
6 Alliance, and we have a petition of about 3,800, as of
7 today, of signatures in opposition to this railroad,
8 against it, because it is not a good economic or
9 environmental project.

10 We do feel for the people -- everyone in
11 the basin. We have family in the basin and everything,
12 but there has to be something else besides crude oil
13 and fracking and tar sand and all of that. In order to
14 make a community, you have to come up with several
15 different resources for income. And this is a
16 possibility. And they need to go back to the table and
17 come up with different ideas because these fossil fuels
18 may be something of the past.

19 Anything else?

20 Any way, one of the reasons that they
21 didn't do the -- that they didn't do the Craig Colorado
22 route, yes they said it was because of sage grouse, but
23 the Whitmore and the Emma Park area down there also has
24 sage grouse, and it is a nesting ground down there. So
25 whoever did that research botched that.

1 The reason that they do that is because the
2 (inaudible) board, the transportation board was going
3 to lean toward that one because the people in Colorado
4 wanted it. And because it was supposed to be a dummy
5 route. They have always wanted Argyle Canyon route.
6 And now, a Whitmore is -- they want to attach to the
7 rail line on Highway 6, because they don't just want to
8 send the oil out of state, they want to send it to the
9 Gulf Coast. They want to send it out of the country.

10 So, why is it a good idea economically or
11 environmentally that the U.S. is purchasing oil from
12 other countries?

13 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thirty seconds.

14 MS. PECK: We can produce our own, even
15 though there is not a lot. So we have the means to
16 produce our own. Why on earth are we sending it out of
17 the country. That makes no sense, whatsoever.

18 So I think that's all he wanted to get
19 across, and I appreciate the time given. Thank you.
20 We vote no on this project.

21 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thank you for your
22 comments.

23 Pamela Underwood, I see that you're still
24 on the Zoom. I am going to try and have you unmute
25 again since you registered to provide comments. Okay,

1 and Pamela I am going to ask you to unmute.

2 MS. UNDERWOOD: Can you hear me?

3 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Yes, I can hear you.

4 You have three minutes.

5 MS. UNDERWOOD: Hi, my name is Pamela
6 Underwood, and I'm a landowner in Argyle. This
7 property has been in my family for over 40 years. I
8 have -- I also come from a family who has worked in the
9 oil field for over 30 years.

10 I support drilling and keeping the country
11 oil-independent, but not at a cost of destroying the
12 environment, people's health, communities, the
13 destruction of private-owned land and the possibility
14 my grandchildren will not have the opportunity to enjoy
15 this land.

16 I've heard the comments about people who
17 support this. What they so easily forget is just a few
18 years ago during the last boom, rent went from \$500 a
19 month to \$2,000 a month in the basin. They forgot how
20 after the boom was over, people lost their homes and
21 their way of life. I ensure you, this will happen
22 again, as Melissa Peck said. As soon as we get a
23 democratic president, it will happen.

24 I live in Price, and I heard people say,
25 "Oh, the railway is going to bring more industry here."

1 That railway has not brought any new industry to Carbon
2 County in decades. We rely on coal. That is the only
3 thing we use that railway for.

4 I would like to see the Whitmore route
5 removed from consideration because it was the
6 last-minute route added to the paperwork that was
7 submitted to the STB. We did not get an opportunity to
8 comment on that route during public comments.

9 Now, that.

10 Drexel and Hamilton has agreed to finance
11 the railway, they should return the \$28 million to the
12 CIB so they can put the Colorado route back on the
13 table since it does make the most logical and
14 economical sense.

15 The last thing I oppose, the petition for
16 exemption and the request for a refund for filing fees.
17 The SCIC has not been transparent about this railway
18 and have shown how deceitful they are and therefore
19 they should be required to meet or exceed all
20 requirements. In fact, since they are requesting to
21 destroy forest, endanger wildlife, contaminate water
22 and destroy people's property all in the name of oil,
23 they should be held to a higher standard.

24 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thirty seconds.

25 MS. UNDERWOOD: Thank you, I'm done.

1 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thank you for your
2 comments. Unmute, call-in user ending in 4663.

3 MR. STANGEL: Hi. My name is Mike Stangel
4 I am the host of the (inaudible) with Newstalk KVEL.
5 We've been broadcasting this show, this event, live on
6 KVEL local in the Uinta Basin, and I want to just add a
7 few comments.

8 We had Mike McKee that joined us in the
9 studio prior to this event and was broadcast. We got
10 some great feedback about and also we had (inaudible)
11 Rio Grande was on there as well, a representative for
12 Rio Grande. We had some great updates about it. And I
13 encourage those who are listening to voice their
14 opinions and also share their comments as well.

15 I wanted to add a few things to this. One
16 of the things that came up was the money, the funds,
17 that were used for the CIB board. During our
18 conversation today, Mike McKee, announced that the
19 monies that were -- the grant money that they had
20 received upon the commercialization that that money
21 will be returned back to the CIB. And that the
22 commitment that they have made, and it is a contract
23 commitment. So, that's a substantial return of the CIB
24 money back, so that that money can be used for further
25 projects through the CIB board at their discretion.

1 I just wanted to voice my public opinion
2 and support of this. I think the project is going to
3 be great. I think that it is an opportunity for the
4 basin residents as a whole to experience an opportunity
5 of growth, not only within the oil extraction business
6 but also diversification of other businesses and
7 energy.

8 I will also add that the Uinta Basin
9 doesn't have a rail. There's other places that do, the
10 larger cities, Salt Lake City. There is also some
11 rural areas that have rail. My question to those that
12 are opposing it is: Why are those areas more important
13 than the families that live here in the basin? Because
14 these families need jobs. They need to be able to
15 provide for their family, save for their retirement and
16 be able to take care of the next generation as well.

17 So, I think when we look at this as a whole
18 as a big picture we need to consider everybody not just
19 what we want but what is good for everybody as a whole
20 as a population. And that's the end of my comments,
21 thank you.

22 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: "My PC" I am going to
23 try and assist you in unmuting one more time. "My PC,"
24 I am going to ask you to unmute. "My PC," you are
25 unmuted within Zoom, so you just need to unmute on your

1 end and we should be able to hear you.

2 Zoom user by the name "My PC." You are
3 unmuted within Zoom. You just need to unmute on your
4 end and hopefully we'll be able to hear you for your
5 comments. Again, you can call in using the dial-in
6 number to provide our oral comments, and I will look
7 for your number with your hand raised if you are able
8 to call in.

9 Ladies and gentlemen we heard from
10 everybody who requested to speak and have time left.
11 For those of you using the Zoom webinar, please raise
12 your hand bu using the raise hand icon if you've not
13 already provided an oral comment and would like to
14 provide an oral comment. For the call-in own users
15 please press star 9 if you like to provide an oral
16 comment.

17 Seeing none, is there anyone who has
18 already spoken who would like to elaborate on their
19 previous comments? Zoom user Krayden Haslem. I am
20 going to ask you to unmute.

21 MR. HASLEM: Hi. This is Krayden Haslem.
22 I would just like to provide a comment real quick.

23 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Go ahead. You have
24 three minutes.

25 MR. HASLEM: Yeah, I just wanted to provide

1 a little different perspective. I was a pilot that
2 flew this area quite a bit as a pipeline controller for
3 compressed natural gas, both towards Craig and towards
4 Price. The area that is going to be impacted by the
5 Craig route that all the people in Argyle Canyon are
6 proposing is a way bigger area, and it's beautiful.
7 Both areas are beautiful. I get that. I get that they
8 are upset that their cabin places are getting
9 encroached on. I get that. I get how that's
10 upsetting. I get how the sage grouse are important. I
11 also get that this community needs some extra things.

12 If oil and gas is truly going away, this
13 rail line won't be used for moving oil and gas. It
14 will be used for whatever is new. And I'm excited to
15 see that growth. Thank you.

16 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thank you for your
17 comment. Okay. Call-in user ending in 9726, I see
18 your hand is raised. I am going to ask you to unmute.
19 Call-in user ending in 9726.

20 Can you hear me?

21 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: I can hear you. You
22 have three minutes.

23 MR. ALLEN: Thank you. My name is Reid
24 Allen. And I'd like to enforce everything that Darrell
25 has said.

1 This -- it is a pretty canyon, and it's
2 going to screw up the water, which we all depend on up
3 in there, the springs, the fire hazard.

4 You put -- I personally put a trailer up
5 there. And when the fire comes, they won't even let me
6 go in and take that out. It's just a bad deal.

7 There's a lot of other ways they could take that
8 railroad. They could take it even off of the Soldier
9 Summit and go down. It's just not feasible in our area
10 or even when they follow even the 191 Highway all the
11 way just off the side of it.

12 I just don't see it, and it will ruin the
13 wildlife up there. There's even antelope up there,
14 moose, elk, you know, grouse, deer, even beaver up in
15 there, you know? I just -- please don't let them put
16 it through our canyon. That's all I have to say.
17 Thank you.

18 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thank you for your
19 comments. Okay.

20 Darrell Fordham I see your hand is raised.
21 I am going to ask you to unmute.

22 MR. FORDHAM: Hi, thank you. I appreciate
23 the opportunity to just finish my comments. I just
24 like to make one clarification in regards to
25 Mr. Stangel's comments.

1 The money is only going to go back to the
2 CIB, that \$27.9 million, if construction actually
3 commences on this railway.

4 I've read the contract that he references,
5 and there are no guarantees that that money will ever
6 be repaid, especially if this railway doesn't get
7 built. They flat out gambled the public's money on
8 this because Drexel Hamilton and all the private
9 companies were unwilling to put their own money up to
10 plan this project.

11 And then to reference my previous comments,
12 listing all of the permanent and irreversible impacts
13 that will accompany this project, essentially what the
14 Seven County Coalition and what the Uinta Basin
15 residents are saying, is that all of these impacts
16 don't matter. The profits and enrichment of private
17 oil companies and wealthy oil executives are more
18 important than these permanent and irreversible
19 impacts. Making rich oil companies richer is more
20 important than the lives, properties, farms, ranches
21 and quiet enjoyment of everyone who is in the path of
22 the railway. Our concerns and our rights don't matter.
23 I for one call BS on such notions.

24 Profitability of private companies should
25 not come at the massive expense of private individuals,

1 the environment, wildlife, endangered plants, et
2 cetera.

3 And then, referencing the trucking in the
4 Uinta Basin and the associated pollution, how do you
5 guys think that the oil is going to get to the train?
6 It's not going to levitate there. It's going to be
7 trucked to the trains. And if oil production increases
8 four times what it is now, that means four times the
9 amount of trucks on the roads and the highways in the
10 basin. The only trucks that are going to come off the
11 roads from this project being built are the few that go
12 from Duchesne to Wellington to the current transloading
13 facility down there.

14 I'm also -- you know, if you spent a
15 billion-and-a-half dollars on economic growth of other
16 types, what would the Uinta Basin look like? It
17 certainly wouldn't -- would have much more diversity
18 than this billion-and-a-half dollars is going to
19 create.

20 As far as other businesses coming in, I'm a
21 business owner myself. I truck a dozen semi loads of
22 products in for my business every year. It doesn't
23 come by rail because it's not cheaper to ship it by
24 rail, which is the reason that the rail hasn't made
25 price boom with other industries --

1 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thirty seconds.

2 MR. FORDHAM: -- and it is not going to do
3 it for the Uinta Basin either.

4 You guys are being sold a bill of goods on
5 the backs of -- of public monies to benefit private oil
6 companies. It's only going to create bigger booms,
7 sure, and also much, much, bigger busts. You really
8 need to think about this and look at the complete
9 picture of this project. Thank you.

10 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thank you for your
11 comments. Kerry Farrer. I see your hand is raised. I
12 am going to ask you to unmute.

13 MR. FARRER: Hello. This is Terry Farrer
14 again. I would like to elaborate on this as far as the
15 truck traffic goes.

16 You know, where these proposed rails are, a
17 lot of the oil fields are already out there. So as far
18 as the truck pollution the people might be worried
19 about, a lot of that truck pollution stays off the main
20 roads. In the last couple of years, we have numerous
21 trucks wreck spilling oil all across the basin. And
22 why anybody wouldn't want a safer means of
23 transportation to get the oil out of here, for one.

24 Nobody feels that environmental risks or
25 what they have going on is any less important than the

1 next. It's -- the difficult part for me to understand
2 is how a few can say that they would want this when
3 this could affect many as far as industry. And there's
4 been several industries unlike Carbon County with their
5 rail that have wanted to come in here that have refused
6 to come in here because we didn't have a rail, which
7 is, you know, one of the main things of why people want
8 it -- or would want the rail to get their industry in
9 here is because it is cheaper to haul stuff in and out.
10 And let's talk about the big corporations that we have.

11 Nufill [phonetic], before they sold to
12 McCann [phonetic], spent hundreds of thousands of
13 dollars a year in helping environmental problems
14 getting rid of environmental problems and helping local
15 issues, donated millions of dollars in the time that
16 they have been here to do that. And they left -- they
17 sold out and left with a big corporate company because
18 it just wasn't feasible for them to stay here.

19 And when it comes to stuff like that, if
20 people can't open their eyes and see that that -- that
21 this could be good for up and coming companies that are
22 willing to do the same, then maybe they need to relook
23 at what we have going on and how we've been sitting
24 stagnant for -- long, long before Covid. That's all I
25 got. So, thanks.

1 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thank you for your
2 comments.

3 Okay, ladies and gentlemen, we've received
4 a comment through the chat that I've been asked to read
5 aloud. The comment reads as follows:

6 My name is Amy Hemphill, A-m-y
7 H-e-m-p-h-i-l-l, as a resident of the Uinta Basin,
8 member of a ranching family and an oil and gas industry
9 employee, I would like to support the railway as we
10 need diversification to soften the blow of our current
11 boom-and-bust cycle. I believe that the expansion of
12 drilling will benefit the entire state in the form of
13 tax revenue. I believe the amount of pollution due to
14 truck traffic will be reduced as a distance required to
15 transport crude to market by truck will be reduced.

16 I would like to echo the support given in
17 the comments by Steve Evans. End comment.

18 Okay. Malin Moench, I see your hand is
19 raised. I am going to ask you to unmute.

20 MR. MOENCH: Okay, did that succeed?

21 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Yes, you are unmuted.
22 Go ahead. You have three minutes .

23 MR. MOENCH: I thought the point about what
24 would you get if you did an alternative investment of a
25 billion-and-a-half dollars was a very interesting

1 point.

2 I have an economics degree, and one of the
3 things that I have learned studying that subject is
4 that the employment impact of low carbon energy swamps
5 the employment impact of carbon-based energy. It's --
6 the international monetary funded study of energy costs
7 in the United States. And their study concluded that
8 if you spend a million dollars buying energy in a year,
9 you could support 1.9 permanent jobs. If you spent
10 that same million dollars on wind-powered energy, you
11 would support 5 jobs annually. If you spent that
12 million dollars on solar, you would support 7 permanent
13 jobs.

14 So, if you were to spend that \$1.5 billion
15 on massive solar farms, which the Uinta Basin is
16 excellently suited for, could you have triple or more
17 the employment impact on the people in the basin. And
18 it wouldn't be adding to their pollution problems. It
19 wouldn't be ruining the health of the people who live
20 there. And it would have had higher pay and more
21 stable jobs. It wouldn't be this boom-and-bust cycle
22 of what has been plaguing the Uinta Basin's economy for
23 the last 40 years.

24 That's all I want to say.

25 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thank you for your

1 comments.

2 Ladies and gentlemen, we still have a
3 little time remaining if you would like to make an oral
4 comment. To do so, please sent the host a chat
5 message, raise your hand by using the raise hand icon,
6 or for call in user press star nine to raise your hand.
7 While we won't be presenting any additional information
8 or new content we will stay on the line until the
9 published end time to receive your oral comments.

10 Call-in user ending in 7081, I see your
11 hand is raised. I am going to ask you to unmute.

12 MR. MCKEE: Did I make it?

13 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Yes, we can hear you.
14 Please state your name for the record. You have three
15 minutes.

16 MR. MCKEE: My name is Jeff McKee, and I'm
17 out of Vernal over here. I am 100 percent in favor of
18 this railway. I feel for those landowners that have
19 issues and I think they really need to be looked at.
20 If we have some land and had the issues with, and it
21 would be the similar thing and I think there are some
22 great points. If there is another route that works,
23 and it's doable, great.

24 But so far, living here in the basin, I am
25 very frustrated with these busts. I'm tired of us not

1 having other economical ways to succeed. And if this
2 is available, the other options I haven't heard are
3 available -- the one guys said if you dumped another
4 billion dollars into the basin, you know, what would
5 that do? I'm all up for that idea too, but to my
6 knowledge there haven't been any other billion dollar
7 offers to come in.

8 So real quick, I have -- I do a little bit
9 in the agricultural world. That is most of my life. I
10 think this will help me. I think it will help others.
11 And I'm ready for it. I would like to see us not
12 struggling every time there is a bust. And I think
13 it's just a good option for us. I am in favor of it
14 and 100 percent supportive of it. And that's all I
15 got.

16 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thank you for your
17 comments. Okay, Don Jex or this might be Julie Jex. I
18 see your hand is raised. I am going to ask you to
19 unmute.

20 MR. JEX: I just wanted to make one final
21 comment concerning the responsibility of the government
22 entities that are involved. I don't know how many of
23 you have been following the election results, but I
24 think we're in a real catch-22 here with the
25 possibility of an administration coming into power that

1 has expressly intended to shut down the carbon drilling
2 and fracking industry. And I'm concerned about how
3 this will impact the overall effect of this industry in
4 the Uinta Basin.

5 We need to make sure that before we're
6 dealing with all of these what-ifs, I think that is a
7 major what-if that we need to talk about. And I think,
8 you know, as long as we're dealing with what-ifs,
9 that's one that needs to be taken into account.

10 I realize there is not an environmental
11 impact, but it is certainly going to be an impact
12 somewhere. That's all I have. Thank you.

13 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thank you for your
14 comments.

15 Ladies and gentlemen, we have a little time
16 remaining. Would anyone else like to make an oral
17 comment this evening? Again to make an oral comment,
18 you can send the host a chat message, raise your hand
19 using the raise hand icon, or for call-in users press
20 star 9 to raise your hand.

21 Don Jex, I see your hand is raised again.
22 I am going to ask you to unmute.

23 MS. JEX: Hi, this is Julie Jex again. I
24 have so many conflicting and confusing ideas here
25 because I hear these comments about how everything is

1 going to help the basin. Well, where's the
2 responsibility of the government leaders in the basin
3 for not investigating or proposing additional resources
4 or alternative ideas rather than focusing on this
5 railway, which they proposed was going to run all of
6 this oil out of the basin. Well, part of the problem
7 is they couldn't get a pipeline because the oil is so
8 low grade and not that many people wanted it is my
9 understanding.

10 And then, my second confusing idea is I
11 don't think that the people in the basin realize that
12 we are not opposed to a railway going out of the basin.
13 We are just opposed to it going through private
14 property that we have put a lot of investment, time,
15 energy, money into, just as they have with their farms
16 and ranches, which we -- which we agree with. And we
17 contribute to the economy of the basin.

18 And so, we just don't want it to go through
19 any piece of Argyle Canyon. It's -- it's such a
20 commodity now. And I don't know if these folks realize
21 it, because they're on multiple acres, but it is very,
22 very scarce now. And at some point, the Uinta Basin if
23 they think that it's going to be a bedroom community of
24 Wasatch Front, it may or may not. But number one,
25 there's a lot of infrastructure that needs to be

1 improved. We have family in North Dakota that have
2 seen booms and busts, and they build schools and now
3 the schools are empty.

4 There's just too many what-ifs with no
5 types of guarantees. It's going to take ten years to
6 pay for this railroad as stated in earlier comments.
7 Do we have ten years? What if it doesn't get finished?
8 Then the tax payers of the Seven County Commission will
9 be on the hook. So I don't think that people are
10 really following this through. We just don't have any
11 type of guarantee.

12 And so I think that the government
13 officials in Duchesne and Vernal and surrounding areas
14 need to take a good hard look at their responsibility
15 in all of this. If they want to build a railroad,
16 fine. Just don't do it on my tax dollars and don't
17 take it through Argyle Canyon. Thank you.

18 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thank you for your
19 comments.

20 Darrell Fordham, I see your hand is raised.
21 I am going to ask you to unmute.

22 MR. FORDHAM: Just one final comment. I
23 echo what Julie just said. You know, we're not opposed
24 to economic growth in the basin, and we're not opposed
25 to a railway. Our biggest frustration is that we were

1 never involved in the process of the study of these
2 routes and of possible alternatives. All three of
3 these routes now go through our canyon and through our
4 community. And they've been literally just shoved down
5 our throats. And, you know, if the Seven County
6 Coalition had been open and honest and upfront from the
7 beginning and if they had brought potentially affected
8 landowners into the process and gave us a seat at the
9 table instead of doing all of this planning and having
10 all their meetings behind closed doors where the public
11 wasn't permitted to participate, you know, we would
12 have a different out look on this. But the fact is
13 that they've done everything they could to shut us out
14 of the process, to limit our voices. And, you know, at
15 this point, we feel like we have no other alternative
16 but to oppose this railway entirely because our voices
17 haven't been heard. Our concerns haven't been
18 addressed, and they're just shoving this down our
19 throat through the middle of our community. And that's
20 where our frustration and our heartburn comes.

21 It's not that we don't feel for the people
22 in the basin and your economy and your families and,
23 you know, we -- we don't have any benefit to -- to the
24 basin's economy not growing and prospering and
25 succeeding. You know, we support a significant portion

1 of those communities with our tax dollars that we pay
2 out there, again, for no services. So, you know,
3 this -- this process could have been handled totally
4 differently. But frankly, the Seven County Coalition
5 has hid and lied and misled the public to garner
6 support and they just haven't been truthful about this
7 project from the very beginning.

8 You know, I've been to 30-plus meetings
9 regarding this project. I've spent hundreds and
10 hundreds of hours researching this project, going to
11 all the Seven County Coalition meetings, listening to
12 them, going to all the STB meetings.

13 You know, our concerns are being ignored.
14 Nobody is working with us to find a resolution to find
15 another route around our community. And that's the
16 problem that we have with this railroad. Thank you.

17 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thank you for your
18 comments.

19 Jean Mold, I see your hand is raised. I am
20 going to ask you to unmute.

21 MS. MOLD: I would just like to echo
22 Darrell's last comments and that, you know, in the
23 Uinta Basin, you know, people are wondering why we are
24 so passionate about Argyle. And this would be similar,
25 and it's not the same. But it would be similar to

1 trying to propose a railway up through Diamond
2 Mountains where it has been in families for generation
3 and generations and properties are worth millions of
4 dollars, but more importantly they are important part
5 of properties to the landowners and to the families.
6 And, you know, it's important.

7 So I -- my point is the same as Darrell's
8 last comments is that what if we could find a better
9 route, a route that wouldn't affect over 300
10 landowners, you know? And I know that some are -- not
11 all are affected directly, but all are affected up in
12 that area. That's a lot of property owners affected by
13 some -- by this decision.

14 So, again, I am very proeconomic
15 development for the Uinta Basin. I am not opposed to
16 the railway; I am opposed to these routes. Thank you.

17 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thank you for your
18 comments. Ladies and gentlemen, would anyone else like
19 to make an oral comment this evening?

20 Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for
21 participating in this online public meeting. All
22 comments whether submitted orally, electronically
23 through the project website or in writing through the
24 U.S. Mail, will receive equal consideration in
25 preparing the final EIS.

1 Please submit your comments via the
2 Board-sponsored project website at
3 www.uintabasinrailwayeis.com or you can mail your
4 comments to Josh Wayland Surface Transportation Board,
5 c/o ICF, 9300 Lee Highway, Fairfax, Virginia, 22031,
6 Attention: Environmental filing, Docket No. FD 36284.

7 To be considered in the final EIS, all
8 substantive comments should be received or postmarked
9 by the close of the comment period on December 14,
10 2020.

11 Remember that the draft EIS is available on
12 the Board-sponsored project website at
13 www.uintabasinrailwayeis.com and at libraries in the
14 project area. Thank you for your participation this
15 evening. This meeting is adjourned.

16 (Concluded at 8:08 p.m.)

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22
23
24
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\$	2	5
\$1.5 74:14	20 36:5	5 74:11
\$1500 42:3	2014 27:11	50 29:15 30:25
\$2,000 62:19	2019 14:11,18	506 48:23
\$27.9 69:2	2020 2:1 5:8 15:3 22:4,5 83:10	56 19:23 20:1
\$28 63:11	2050 57:15	59 48:24
\$500 42:1 62:18	22031 5:13 23:7 83:5	
-	25 56:14	6
-o0o- 2:3 83:17	3	6 48:10,12 61:7
0	3 2:1	60 27:17
05649357 3:8 56:8	3,800 60:6	6:00 2:1,5
0649357 44:9	3.68 11:7	7
0920 56:10	30 15:3 36:17 62:9	7 74:12
	30-plus 81:8	7081 75:10
1	300 82:9	73 20:3
1.9 74:9	30th 21:24 22:4	8
10-off 58:11	31 6:19	8-hour 27:7,10 28:20
10-on 58:11	36284 5:14 21:21,22 23:8,9 83:6	81 12:17
10.52 11:8	3994 29:4 59:3	85-mile 10:12
100 75:17 76:14		874-8149-6515 3:8 44:8 56:7
103 13:7	4	877-853-5247 3:7 44:8 56:7
13 13:6	4 19:24 20:5	88 14:4
14 83:9	4,000 21:8,9 41:14	8:08 83:16
14th 5:8 22:5,8	40 51:7 62:7 74:23	
19 14:11	45 22:4	9
191 12:10 13:16 68:10	4663 64:2	9 4:24 23:25 40:20 41:1 50:9 66:15 77:20
	4910 24:11	

9-mile 38:14	additional 20:3,7 75:7 78:3	agree 39:16 42:21 46:13 55:12 78:16
9300 5:12 23:6 83:5	Additionally 3:12 57:2	agreeance 41:17 43:19
9726 67:17,19	addressed 37:10 80:18	agreed 63:10
99 27:16	addressing 14:23	agricultural 11:2 54:22 76:9
A	adequately 37:9	agriculture 35:20 48:16
A-M-Y 73:6	adjourned 83:15	ahead 7:18 25:8 26:14 32:11 41:7 52:11 59:10 60:2 66:23 73:22
abandonment 9:6	adjudicatory 9:4	air 16:9 18:23 27:7,14 28:6,14 33:2,4 42:22 45:18
ability 57:10 58:1	administration 25:14,15 46:24 76:25	AJ 50:19
abuse 58:16	administrator 25:13	Alaska 42:13
access 8:18 20:12 35:9	Admittedly 35:17	alleged 47:24
accessibility 49:14	Adverse 17:25	Allen 67:23,24
accompany 69:13	advocate 43:16	Alliance 60:6
account 32:21 77:9	Affairs 9:24	allowing 33:1 35:10 57:11
accountant 37:14	affect 16:19,21,24 18:4 38:3,16 47:19 72:3 82:9	aloud 73:5
acknowledge 35:14	affected 30:22 33:8 38:11 45:10 46:6,7 80:7 82:11,12	alteration 48:21 49:1,12
acquire 25:21	affects 48:13	alternative 10:20 11:22, 23,24 12:3,7,8,14,16,21, 24 13:1,5,12,14,15,18, 19,23,24,25 14:3,7,24,25 15:25 16:19,21 17:8,18, 19,20 18:6,9,13,14,15 19:2,3,4,6,7,15 26:22 73:24 78:4 80:15
acquisition 9:6 18:1	affiliates 35:6	Alternatively 23:1
acres 78:21	afford 54:16 55:21	alternatives 11:13,17,20, 21,22,25 12:1 14:14,22 16:14,15,18,23 17:3 18:7 20:21 42:20 80:2
act 9:18 11:11 17:1 27:20 28:6	affordable 58:5	Ambient 27:7
action 11:13,21,24 12:1 14:21 16:14,15,18,23 17:3 18:7 19:4 20:21	afraid 51:22	
activities 18:2 34:25	afternoon 3:14,22	
activity 34:20 49:16	agencies 6:24 8:9 9:20, 21,22 10:3 11:12 14:20 15:20,21,24 17:2 19:1	
actual 33:20	agency 7:1,23 8:8 9:1,2, 22 14:13 25:18	
add 23:25 24:17 50:17 54:20 64:6,15 65:8	agenda 8:6	
added 30:7 63:6	agent 37:15	
adding 33:5 74:18		
addition 11:25 18:8 20:1		

America 26:18	29:15 30:1,20 31:5 34:3	avoid 13:12,21,25 19:4,7
American 41:13	37:25 38:4 41:16 44:17	avoiding 17:8
amount 30:14 40:9 45:16	45:4,8,12,20 47:25 51:4,	aware 25:25 30:13
70:9 73:13	8 54:5 56:16 60:23 67:2,	awful 31:11
amounts 56:25	4,6 68:9 82:12 83:14	
Amy 73:6	areas 8:14 16:5 18:10,18,	
analysis 2:7,16 6:2,9 8:2	19,20 19:9 34:4 46:6	B
9:14 18:25 26:21 27:3	65:11,12 67:7 79:13	
28:22 35:3	Argyle 13:3 19:10 29:14	back 28:5 44:7 50:17
analyze 28:13,14	38:8,14 44:16,24 45:5,8	60:16 63:12 64:21,24
analyzed 8:15 14:14 16:3	55:1,7 60:5 61:5 62:6	69:1
28:17	67:5 78:19 79:17 81:24	background 25:12
analyzes 14:20 18:20	Army 9:23	backs 71:5
analyzing 26:23	Ashley 18:10	bad 42:23 68:6
Angeles 27:10	asset 36:8	band 3:12 27:4
animal 49:7	assist 65:23	barrel 36:10
animals 33:8	assistance 2:21	barriers 49:3
announced 64:18	assurance 52:18,24	base 36:7
annually 74:11	assured 52:21	Based 18:25
answers 46:9	athletics 41:12	basically 37:20
antelope 68:13	attach 61:6	basin 2:8 6:10 7:7,19 9:2
anticipates 10:21	attachments 21:7	10:6,7,13,18,23 11:6,14,
anticipating 38:5	attempted 31:16	16 12:13,22 20:18 21:17,
apologize 26:11	attending 7:3	20 23:14 25:20 26:25
applicant 8:11 10:9	Attention 5:13 23:7 83:6	27:8,10,11,17,20,22,23
approval 35:7 36:22	attitude 48:8	28:18 32:24 34:15,16,21
approved 27:23	attract 48:6	35:8,10 36:9,12,13 37:12
approximately 10:12	authority 14:5 15:13,14,	39:17,19,24,25 40:3,6,10
11:7,8 12:16 13:7 14:4	16 21:25	41:11,12,15,21 44:16,19
apps 3:14	authorize 9:9 10:5 15:18	46:13,18 47:22 48:3,4
archeological 49:18	19:13,14,20	51:17 52:2 53:14 54:18
area 13:20 14:2,16 16:19,	authorized 15:25	55:18 56:14,20 57:5,7,
22 18:17 19:10 27:8,22	authorizes 7:23	13,20,22 58:4,8 60:11
	average 11:9	62:19 64:6 65:4,8,13
		69:14 70:4,10,16 71:3,21
		73:7 74:15,17 75:24 76:4
		77:4 78:1,2,6,11,12,17,
		22 79:24 80:22 81:23
		82:15

basin's 28:19 33:4 47:14 74:22 80:24	BLM 27:22	BS 69:23
bears 29:19	blow 73:10	bu 66:12
beautiful 45:5 67:6,7	blows 42:23	Buffalo 29:20
beaver 68:14	board 2:6,15 5:12 7:22 8:8 9:1,2,4,10,14 10:4 14:5 15:8,9,12,17,25 19:13,14,20,21 20:11 21:15 23:6 61:2 64:17,25 83:4	build 47:13 49:9,19 57:25 79:2,15
bedroom 78:23	Board's 6:1,8 7:8,12 8:1 9:13 17:16 21:13,15,19 23:12	building 26:24 45:21
began 14:11 22:4	board-sponsored 5:10 20:15 22:15,25 83:2,12	built 48:1 69:7 70:11
begin 4:9 8:24 31:13	boom 62:18,20 70:25	Bureau 9:22,24 12:19 13:8 17:5 18:14,16
beginning 80:7 81:7	boom-and-bust 51:4 73:11 74:21	business 56:22 65:5 70:21,22
believer 44:18	booms 71:6 79:2	businesses 42:5 43:9 48:6 56:19 65:6 70:20
belittle 48:2	botched 60:25	bust 76:12
Bench 10:14 12:8,23	bottom 2:23	busts 71:7 75:25 79:2
Beneficial 17:23	box 21:5,7	buying 74:8
benefit 39:18 71:5 73:12 80:23	bread-winner 58:10	
bi-partisan 9:3	breaking 42:16	C
bid 57:12	breaks 42:18	c/o 5:12 23:6 83:5
Biden-led 28:4	breeding 29:25 49:4	cabin 45:3 67:8
big 33:7 42:6 43:16 57:4 65:18 72:10,17	briefly 16:1 22:18	call 3:11 24:2 30:8 44:7 56:6 66:5,8 69:23 75:6
bigger 67:6 71:6,7	bring 27:19 42:25 54:18 59:14 62:25	call-in 4:24 23:24 24:10 29:3 40:20 41:1 50:7 56:10 64:2 66:14 67:17, 19 75:10 77:19
biggest 33:13 79:25	brings 23:10	called 4:17 5:1 6:21 7:2 9:1
bill 71:4	broad 9:4	caller 59:2
billion 74:14 76:4,6	broadcast 64:9	Cambria 52:7,12
billion-and-a-half 70:15, 18 73:25	broadcasting 64:5	cameras 29:18
billions 59:23	brood-rearing 17:9	Camp 38:21
biological 16:7 18:23	brought 54:6 63:1 80:7	canyon 11:22 12:7,10, 13,16 13:1,4,15,16,17,
biologist 36:20		
biology 52:16		
bit 6:17 67:2 76:8		
blasting 30:14		

22,24 17:18 18:8,13,17 19:5,10 29:14 38:8,12, 17,25 39:3 45:5 54:2 55:1,7 61:5 67:5 68:1,16 78:19 79:17 80:3	72:9	7:4 8:20 15:1,4,7 21:3,4, 5,6,7,9,10 22:3,10,23 23:2,4,20,21 44:6 47:9 63:8 66:13,14,16,22 67:17 73:4,5,17 75:4 76:21 77:17 79:22 82:19 83:9
capital 57:11	chief 25:13	commentary 35:3
capture 29:18,20	children 53:12	commenter 24:1,4 40:18, 23
car 41:25 42:17	choose 22:22	Commenters 4:17
carbon 14:1 30:17 63:1 72:4 74:4 77:1	choosing 48:11	comments 4:7,12,25 5:5, 7,9,23 6:17 8:5,22 14:13, 16 15:6 19:17 20:5,9,25 21:7 22:7,8,19,20,21 23:5,9,15 24:3,5 26:4,5,9 28:25 31:21 34:6 35:4 37:1 39:8,16 40:17 43:23 45:2,13 47:4 50:4 52:6 53:18 55:25 58:20,22 61:22,25 62:16 63:8 64:2,7,14 65:20 66:5,6, 19 68:19,23,25 69:11 71:11 73:2,17 75:1,9 76:17 77:14,25 79:6,19 81:18,22 82:8,18,22 83:1,4,8
carbon-based 74:5	Church 38:21	Commerce 56:16
care 65:16	CIB 63:12 64:17,21,23,25 69:2	commercial 34:20 35:19
Carl 40:18,21 50:6	cities 65:10	commercialization 64:20
carrier 10:17,18	City 42:2,24 57:16 65:10	commission 54:12 79:8
carry 10:24	claiming 47:24	commitment 49:8,10 64:22,23
case 7:13 9:19 11:14 21:20,23 24:11,22 27:6	clarification 68:24	commitments 36:3
catch-22 76:24	clean 28:5 40:12	commodities 10:25 11:2
cetera 54:13 70:2	clear 27:20	commodity 55:5 78:20
challenged 56:21	click 21:1,17	common 10:17,18
challenges 56:19	close 5:7 83:9	communities 35:10
challenging 56:21	closed 80:10	
Chamber 56:16	closely 3:4 44:22	
chance 5:17 33:13,14 35:11	closer 59:6	
change 33:9 45:7 51:23	closing 3:14	
Chapter 19:24 20:5 48:10,12	coal 53:3 63:2	
characteristics 18:18	coalition 8:10 10:10,11, 20 11:7 12:4 13:11 14:6 15:18 19:23 69:14 80:6 81:4,11	
characters 21:8,9	Coalition's 8:11 15:13 21:25	
charge 43:2	Coast 61:9	
chat 2:22 4:22 23:22 44:6 50:8 73:4 75:4 77:18	cold 27:14	
cheaper 51:16 70:23	Colorado 29:24 34:1 52:14 60:21 61:3 63:12	
	commences 69:3	
	comment 4:6,20 5:2,8	

51:15 57:16 62:12 81:1	conditions 3:1 11:4,6 15:16,17 36:16	continually 53:6
community 29:13,15 33:18 36:19 56:15 60:14 67:11 78:23 80:4,19 81:15	conduct 3:4 4:2 9:20 21:21	continue 36:9
companies 31:14 34:23 43:7 59:21 69:9,17,19,24 71:6 72:21	conducted 20:23	continuing 23:15
company 10:15 30:11 34:20 53:10 54:13 72:17	conducting 9:15	contract 64:22 69:4
compared 13:1,24 19:5 40:12	confines 26:23	Contracting 41:10
compete 42:10	conflicting 77:24	contractor 2:14
competitive 51:17 57:8, 12	confusing 77:24 78:10	contribute 78:17
complete 71:8	connect 12:22	contributes 40:10
completely 48:11	connecting 10:17	controller 67:2
compliance 27:20 28:20	connection 3:10 12:14	conversation 64:18
complication 42:9	connections 3:12	convey 48:22
component 36:14	cons 44:17	cooperating 6:24 8:9 9:20 10:3 14:20 15:20,24 19:1 25:18
compressed 67:3	consequences 54:8	Coordinating 9:25
concentrations 27:9,12	consideration 32:17 58:20 63:5 82:24	copy 37:10
concern 18:17,21 31:1 33:14 37:20 38:21 59:25	considered 22:6 26:2 32:19 37:19 83:7	corporate 42:7 72:17
concerned 30:10 45:10, 11,16,18,25 77:2	considers 9:10 12:2	corporations 72:10
concerns 37:9 44:25 46:11,25 69:22 80:17 81:13	construct 10:11 11:19 12:4 14:5 15:13,15 21:25	Corps 9:24
conclude 58:12	constructed 51:6	correct 52:17
concluded 74:7 83:16	construction 7:23 9:7,9, 16 10:5 17:24 30:11,23 31:5 46:2 48:19 52:24 69:2	cost 30:6,9 37:16 54:14 62:11
concludes 16:13 28:22	consult 23:15 56:18	costs 74:6
conclusions 7:9 8:4,16 16:2 19:19	consultant 35:2	counsel 25:13
concrete 46:9	consultation 14:19 19:1	counties 54:15,16
	contact 3:22	countries 61:12
	contaminate 63:21	country 30:17 61:9,17 62:10
	content 75:8	county 8:10 10:9 13:20 19:11 31:8 38:4 54:12 55:10 63:2 69:14 72:4 79:8 80:5 81:4,11
		couple 37:8 71:20

COURT 33:25		degree 74:2
Covid 45:23 72:24	D	DEIS 25:18,24
Covid-19 22:11 41:22	Dakota 79:1	delay 16:6 18:22
Craig 30:1 31:12 60:21 67:3,5	damage 45:15	demand 11:5 57:20
create 17:10 70:19 71:6	damaging 33:19	democratic 62:23
created 32:18 33:16	dance 27:3	Denver 52:14
creating 17:23 57:12,23 58:18	danger 30:19	deny 15:12 55:22
Creek 38:14	dangerous 51:19 52:1	denying 36:13
creeks 30:22	Darrell 24:13,15 47:5,8 67:24 68:20 79:20	depend 11:4 18:6 68:2
Crescent 27:24	Darrell's 81:22 82:7	dependance 40:2
crime 58:12	dates 22:13	dependents 35:12
crimes 58:15	day 11:9 17:15 36:23	depending 11:6 15:24 17:14
critical 18:17	days 22:4	deputy 25:13
crop 48:17	deal 37:25 68:6	derailing 42:17
cross 12:17 13:5,8 16:16 17:3 18:7,10,14,16	dealing 77:6,8	derailments 33:13
crossings 48:23	debate 35:23	deride 48:1
crude 10:22 11:5 35:16 40:5 57:7 60:12 73:15	decade 35:15 57:18	derived 35:16
cultural 16:10 18:24 49:17	decades 31:6 63:2	deserve 48:4
cumulative 16:12 28:2, 15,18	decarbonization 35:25 52:19,25	destroy 63:21,22
curious 47:23	deceitful 63:18	destroying 62:11
current 3:1 53:25 70:12 73:10	December 2:1 5:8 14:18 22:5,8 83:9	destruction 62:13
customer 36:7	decide 15:12,17,21	detailed 15:23 46:5
cut 27:21	decides 19:13	devastate 31:10
cycle 73:11 74:21	decision 15:11,12 82:13	developed 13:12
cyclical 56:23	decisions 10:3 15:23 21:23	development 44:19 46:12 47:1 58:2,19 82:15
	decreases 49:4	dial-in 66:5
	deer 29:19 68:14	Diamond 82:1
	defer 36:20	dictate 43:3
		die 40:5

diesel 33:12 40:11	document 21:11	drive 45:6
difference 46:21	documents 20:22	driver 40:3
differently 81:4	Doe 40:23,24 41:2 50:6	driving 39:23 59:7
difficult 6:6 72:1	dollar 76:6	drought 34:3
difficulty 3:9	dollars 43:8 54:14 59:23 70:15,18 72:13,15 73:25 74:8,10,12 76:4 79:16 81:1 82:4	dry 33:15
direct 28:13	domestic 58:16	Duchesne 13:20 19:9,10 54:18 55:9,10 70:12 79:13
directly 47:18 82:11	Don 76:17 77:21	due 11:15 22:11 48:19,23 56:22 57:1 73:13
director 34:18	Donald 37:2	dummy 61:4
dirt 30:15 31:7	donated 72:15	dumped 76:3
disastrous 38:16,25	doors 80:10	Durfee 32:9,10,13,14
discounts 57:5	Dotsero 25:22	dynamics 44:24
discretion 64:25	double 27:25 57:15	
discuss 8:13,18,20 20:12	doubling 28:1	E
disingenuous 36:15	download 7:14 20:20	earlier 8:25 79:6
disparage 48:2	downloads 3:15	Early 13:11
displacement 18:1	downturn 54:17	earth 61:16
disrupt 46:3	dozen 70:21	easily 62:17
distance 73:14	draft 2:9 5:21 6:10 7:9,20 8:4,5,15,16,22 10:2 11:20 12:1 14:19,20 15:1,2,5,22 16:2,3,13 18:19 19:19,25 20:5,10, 13,19 21:1,23 22:2,19 26:22 37:10 48:10 83:11	eastern 34:21
district 34:24	drafted 37:23	easy 47:18
disturb 17:11 33:10 43:20	drastically 59:18	echo 39:15 73:16 79:23 81:21
disturbed 45:6	Draw 11:23 12:21 13:2,5, 25 16:18 17:20 18:14,15 19:6 54:2	ecological 53:3,8
diverse 47:25	Drexel 63:10 69:8	ecologist 36:20
diversification 35:18 52:22 65:6 73:10	drilling 30:14,18 32:22 38:11 62:10 73:12 77:1	ecology 38:16
diversify 36:7 57:23		economic 9:4 18:2 35:18 37:11,13 39:20 40:3 44:18 46:12 47:12,14,24 56:19 58:2,18 60:8 70:15 79:24
diversifying 35:11		economical 63:14 76:1
diversity 39:20 58:18 70:17		
doable 75:23		
docket 5:14 21:19,21,22 23:7,8 83:6		

economically 55:21 61:10	Encana 27:24	23 23:7,13 26:24 36:19 37:22,23 60:2,9 71:24 72:13,14 77:10 83:6
economics 74:2	encourage 36:8 64:13	
economist 26:19	encroached 67:9	environmentally 14:25 19:3 61:11
economy 35:12,22 44:20 46:18,20 54:16 57:23 58:6,13 74:22 78:17 80:22,24	end 12:25 14:18 15:4 22:5 23:10 50:14 59:16 65:20 66:1,4 73:17 75:9	EPA 28:5,8 EPA's 27:7
effect 28:3,15,18 77:3	endanger 63:21	equal 82:24
effects 18:5 38:1,21,23	endangered 16:25 17:1 49:8 70:1	equally 22:21
efficient 40:12	ending 24:11 56:10 64:2 67:17,19 75:10	erosion 49:15
effort 5:4	energy 16:9 34:14,19 35:2,5,24 45:21 53:1,2 56:25 57:12 58:7,11 65:7 74:4,5,6,8,10 78:15	essentially 69:13
EIS 2:9,14 3:22 5:25 7:21 8:4,5,15,16,23 9:3 10:2 11:20 12:1 13:11 14:10, 12,14,17,19,20 15:1,2,5, 6,22 16:2,3,13 18:20 19:19,25 20:5,10,11,13, 16,19 21:1,23 22:2,6,19 23:16 26:22,23 28:12,14, 16 32:17 37:10 41:18,19 48:10 55:13,20 82:25 83:7,11	enforce 67:24	estimate 11:10
elaborate 66:18 71:14	enforcing 28:5	estimates 11:7
elected 4:18 7:1 59:17	Engineers 9:24	estimating 30:6
election 76:23	engines 17:13 40:11	Evans 56:12 58:15 73:17
electronically 5:3 23:2 82:22	enjoy 62:14	evening 2:12 5:2 6:5 29:1,3 31:22 32:3 34:7 37:2 47:5 77:17 82:19 83:15
elk 29:19 68:14	enjoyment 47:20 69:21	evening's 4:10,21 5:5
emissions 18:23 27:17, 18 28:4 40:11	enormous 30:9	event 64:5,9
Emma 30:1 60:23	enrichment 69:16	everybody's 54:7
employee 73:9	ensure 62:21	everyone's 3:2
employment 74:4,5,17	entire 15:10 73:12	excavation 30:12
empties 42:19	entities 76:22	exceed 17:16 27:10 63:19
empty 79:3	environment 19:23 26:20 32:23 43:9 57:8 62:12 70:1	excellent 25:11
	environmental 2:7,9,16 4:5 5:14,17,22 6:1,7,9, 10,25 7:8,10,20,21 8:1,3, 13,17,20 9:12,13,15,17, 18,20 11:11 12:2 13:13 14:9,21 15:17 16:4,12,15 18:17 19:5,15 20:14,18,	excellently 74:16
		excited 67:14
		executives 69:17
		exemption 63:16
		existing 10:14 12:15,23 49:6

expand 26:5 57:23
expansion 28:7 73:11
expected 26:25 28:1,5
 57:15
expense 69:25
experience 3:9,13 65:4
experiences 56:17
explain 8:22
exploration 32:22 39:18
 40:2
exported 57:7
exposed 27:14
express 35:7
expressly 77:1
extend 12:9
extending 10:12
extra 67:11
extracted 35:13
extraction 56:23 65:5
extremely 33:15
eyes 72:20

F

face 56:20
facilitated 4:6 23:20
facilitator 2:12
facility 70:13
fact 35:23 37:18 63:20
 80:12
factors 39:23
failure 28:21
Fairfax 5:13 23:6 83:5

falsely 47:24
families 45:24 58:7,8
 65:13,14 80:22 82:2,5
family 34:16 45:22 60:11
 62:7,8 65:15 73:8 79:1
family's 58:9
farm 54:6,8
farming 18:3
farms 69:20 74:15 78:15
Farrer 41:4,6,9 43:12
 71:11,13
favor 47:12,17,21 75:17
 76:13
FD 5:14 21:21,22 23:7,9
 83:6
fear 51:23
feasible 11:18 68:9 72:18
feature 2:22
federal 7:23 9:1,21 10:8
 11:12 17:2 25:14 33:3
 49:8 55:4
feed 38:13
feedback 64:10
feeds 3:19
feel 37:9 51:25 55:7
 60:10 75:18 80:15,21
feels 71:24
fees 63:16
feet 56:25
field 20:22 34:25 41:23
 62:9
Field-of-dreams 47:13
fields 71:17
file 21:11

filing 5:14 23:7 63:16
 83:6
filings 21:22
final 14:17 15:5,6,7,8,11,
 12 20:10,11 22:6 76:20
 79:22 82:25 83:7
finalized 59:15
finally 3:17 8:21 35:10,19
finance 63:10
find 20:13,16 21:12,16,
 22 22:24 43:18 47:22
 81:14 82:8
findings 16:2
fine 37:7 79:16
finish 59:24 68:23
finished 60:1,3 79:7
finishing 22:17
fire 30:20 38:21,23
 45:11,13 68:3,5
fires 39:1 45:14 51:24
fish 49:1,4
flat 69:7
flew 67:2
flood 48:22
flourish 36:23
flow 48:22
flows 34:2
focusing 32:20 78:4
fog 32:25
foliage 39:3
folks 6:21 54:18 55:9
 78:20
follow 12:25 13:2,18
 68:10

foolish 51:13	frustrated 75:25	German 26:16
footprint 30:10,23 31:4	frustration 79:25 80:20	give 22:22 25:16 31:8
forced 58:10	fuel 32:23 39:18,22 40:2	glad 5:19 6:15
Fordham 24:13,14,16,19 47:6,7,8 49:14 50:1,16 68:20,22 71:2 79:20,22	fueling 27:25	global 35:11,21,25
forecasted 58:1	fuels 32:18 33:22 49:17 60:17	good 34:9 54:17 55:9 60:8 61:10 65:19 72:21 76:13 79:14
forest 9:23 12:18 18:11 29:21 63:21	full 24:6	goods 57:5 58:2 71:4
forget 62:17	full-time 48:4	government 10:9 46:24 76:21 78:2 79:12
forgot 62:19	functions 48:21	governments 55:4
form 21:3,4,10 27:12 73:12	funded 10:8 52:20 74:6	grade 12:12 13:7 78:8
format 6:16 21:11	funds 64:16	grading 31:9
forward 6:16 23:14 28:21 39:24 40:6	future 11:4	grandchildren 62:14
fossil 32:18,23 33:22 39:18,22 40:2 49:17 60:17	G	Grande 64:11,12
fossil-based 35:22	gambled 69:7	grandfathered 30:25
fossils 49:20	game 29:18 33:7	grant 15:14,16,21 64:19
four-year 28:6	garbage 31:9	grazing 48:16
FRA 25:18	garner 81:5	great 29:10 32:13 37:8 51:21 53:24 64:10,12 65:3 75:22,23
frac 10:25	gas 27:1,16,24 28:2,7 30:17,19 34:19 44:23 46:22 53:3,15 67:3,12,13 73:8	greater 14:1 17:4 19:8 41:15
fracking 60:13 77:2	gases 16:9	greenhouse 16:9
fragmentation 49:2	gate 30:24	grew 34:15 54:3
frame 36:6	gated 29:14	grid-gated 29:13
frankly 81:4	gave 80:8	ground 4:10 38:6,10 42:19 49:10 60:24
free 57:11	generating 17:25	grounds 29:25
freight-moving 40:13	generation 65:16 82:2	group 41:14
friends 34:17	generations 53:7,13 82:3	grouse 29:21 60:22,24 67:10 68:14
Front 34:18 57:16,19 78:24	gentlemen 2:4 24:7 26:10 50:5 66:9 73:3 75:2 77:15 82:18,20	grow 36:23 39:25 42:13 43:3 51:9 57:21
	geology 16:7	

growing 80:24	haul 42:2 72:9	higher 63:23 74:20
grown 42:12	hazard 68:3	highly 40:11
growth 39:22 41:24 43:1, 14 47:12,24 57:18 58:1,3 65:5 67:15 70:15 79:24	hazardous 16:8	highway 5:13 23:6 31:16 38:15 61:7 68:10 83:5
guarantee 39:1 79:11	hazards 16:8 42:14	highways 51:18 70:9
guarantees 69:5 79:5	head 12:9,14 13:3 41:13	holding 22:9
guess 30:8 55:13	Headland 25:3,4,6,10 26:4,7	home 36:22 43:4 58:10
Gulf 61:9	health 3:3 62:12 74:19	homes 62:20
guys 43:6 70:5 71:4 76:3	healthcare 52:15	honest 80:6
	healthy 6:6 26:20 36:4	hook 31:19 59:22 79:9
	hear 25:1,7 26:13 29:6,7 31:25 32:10 34:11 37:4,6 39:11,12 41:6 42:16 44:13 45:2,20 50:21,22 51:2 52:9,10 53:21,22 58:25 59:4 62:2,3 66:1,4 67:20,21 75:13 77:25	hope 6:5 36:22 43:16,17
H	heard 40:4 62:16,24 66:9 76:2 80:17	host 2:23 3:19 4:13,22 23:23 64:4 75:4 77:18
H-E-M-P-H-I-L-L 73:7	hearing 6:17	hours 81:10
habitat 17:4 33:7 48:16 49:1,6,12	heartburn 80:20	huge 33:14,18 46:1 56:25
habitats 17:9	heavily 45:14	human 36:1
Hamilton 63:10 69:8	heavily-wooded 45:8,12	hundreds 58:8 72:12 81:9,10
hand 4:22,23,24 23:23, 25 24:9 29:3 31:23 40:21,25 41:1 44:5 50:8, 10 56:9 58:23 59:2 66:7, 12 67:18 68:20 71:11 73:18 75:5,6,11 76:18 77:18,19,20,21 79:20 81:19	heavy 40:9	husband 32:2 59:8
handled 81:3	held 14:15 22:12 63:23	
hands 40:22 41:3	helped 51:9	I
happen 51:11 62:21,23	helping 72:13,14	iceberg 27:5,6
happened 51:12	helps 41:11	ICF 2:12 5:12 23:6 83:5
happiness 47:20	Hemphill 73:6	icon 4:23 23:24 66:12 75:5 77:19
hard 59:15 79:14	Hey 43:5	ID 3:7 44:8 56:7
harm 34:4	hiatus 28:6	idea 61:10 76:5 78:10
harming 33:4	hid 81:5	ideas 60:17 77:24 78:4
Haslem 66:19,21,25	high 27:12 55:5	identified 11:17 13:13 14:6 19:2 24:21,22,24 48:14 58:25
		identifies 14:24 48:12

identify 40:21 50:9	include 16:5 17:23 18:1 21:23 34:23 36:7 48:15 49:18	influence 57:6
ignore 48:11		influx 48:7
ignoring 26:25 27:4	includes 11:10	information 3:2 5:21,22 8:19 10:2 15:23 20:13 21:13,16 22:14,24 75:7
ill 32:3 59:8	including 6:20 8:14 9:5, 21 10:25 11:5 15:8,10,16 16:24 18:21 20:22 48:17 49:7 56:15	infrastructure 8:10 10:10 57:25 78:25
impact 2:9 3:13 5:22 6:11 7:10,20,21 17:16 20:18 26:24 28:16 32:21 33:20 37:22,23 38:6 46:1 47:19 74:4,5,17 77:3,11	income 60:15	instructions 21:3
impacted 67:4	incoming 46:23	integrative 52:15
impacting 30:4	increase 33:2 39:19,22	intended 52:21 77:1
impacts 8:17 9:12 12:2 13:13,21,25 14:21,23 16:4,12,15,17 17:8,22,23 18:1,21 19:5,8,16,22 26:2 32:23 36:19 48:25 49:4 53:4,8 60:2 69:12, 15,19	increased 32:17,22 33:21 49:3,14	intent 14:12
implementation 28:9	increases 58:16 70:7	interactive 20:20
implications 38:2	increasing 33:5	interest 23:11
important 45:24 49:20 65:12 67:10 69:18,20 71:25 82:4,6	independent 2:13 9:3	interested 4:7
importantly 82:4	independently 35:2	interesting 73:25
impose 19:21	Indian 9:24 11:22 12:6, 10,13,16,18 13:1,15,16, 17,22,24 17:17 18:8,12, 13,21 19:5 45:5 54:1	internal 37:15
impossible 28:20	indirect 28:13,17	international 57:10 74:6
improved 79:1	individual 3:12	internet 3:10,12
in-person 3:5	individuals 47:23 69:25	interrupted 38:15
inability 57:1	industries 35:13 39:25 41:24 43:15 47:25 51:9 70:25 72:4	Interstate 10:18
inadequate 26:23 52:16 55:13	industry 34:14 39:17 40:7 43:14 44:23 46:23 54:19,21 56:23 57:9 62:25 63:1 72:3,8 73:8 77:2,3	interview 3:23
inappropriate 4:16	Industry-wise 41:22	introduce 5:24
inaudible 59:18 61:2 64:4,10	inevitable 35:22,25	Introducing 38:23
incentive 36:7	infirm 28:22	inventoried 18:10
		invested 45:20
		investigating 78:3
		investing 53:6 59:21
		investment 59:20 73:24 78:14
		investor 36:4
		invite 5:9
		involved 36:21 39:17 54:15 76:22 80:1

involvement 21:2	11,13,21	
involving 58:15	John 40:23,24 41:2 50:6	L
irretrievable 49:8,9	join 3:21	label 48:8
irreversible 48:14 49:11, 15,16,17,19,21,22 69:12, 18	joined 50:7 64:8	ladies 2:4 24:7 26:10 50:5 66:9 73:3 75:2 77:15 82:18,20
irrigated 48:17	joining 6:4,20 7:17	Lake 42:1,2,24 57:3,16 65:10
isolated 28:15	Joseph 34:14	land 9:22 12:17,19,20 13:8,10 16:10 17:5 18:4, 6,7,8,14,15,16 45:4 48:18 58:5 62:13,15 75:20
issue 39:2	Josh 2:14 3:23 6:2,7 7:25 23:18 83:4	landowner 44:16 62:6
issued 14:11,17 21:24	Joshua 5:11,24 6:3 23:5	landowners 46:6 75:18 80:8 82:5,10
issues 72:15 75:19,20	joshua.wayland@stb.gov. 3:25	lands 9:25 18:5,11 48:15, 17 53:11,14
	judgement 36:21	landscape 33:10 49:22, 24
J	Julie 53:19 76:17 77:23 79:23	language 4:17
James 39:9,10	June 14:11	larger 65:10
Jean 44:10 81:19	justice 16:12	largest 16:19
Jeff 75:16	justify 37:16	last-minute 63:6
Jennifer 2:4,11 6:3,12 7:17 23:18 24:15,17,20 25:6,8 26:3,8,14 28:10, 24 29:7,10 31:2,17,20 32:1,5,8,11 33:23 34:5, 10,11 36:17,25 37:4,6 38:18 39:4,7,12 40:16 41:7 43:10,22 44:13 46:14 47:3 49:13,25 50:3,22 52:5,10 53:17,22 55:15,24 58:14,21 59:5, 10 61:13,21 62:3 63:24 64:1 65:22 66:23 67:16, 21 68:18 71:1,10 73:1,21 74:25 75:13 76:16 77:13 79:18 81:17 82:17	juvenile 58:16	Lastly 38:20
	K	laws 9:19
Jex 37:3,4,8 38:20 39:5 53:19,21,24 55:16 76:17, 20 77:21,23	K&b 41:10	lawyer 26:19
jobs 17:23 53:2 56:24 57:23 58:19 65:14 74:9,	Karen 25:3	layoff 58:7
	keeping 42:8 62:10	lead 9:2
	Kendall 50:19,21,24	leaders 78:2
	Kerry 41:4	lean 61:3
	key 36:14	learned 18:20 74:3
	kind 46:2 51:5,22 59:5	Lears 18:16
	knowledge 76:6	lease 57:24
	Krayden 66:19,21	
	KVEL 64:4,6	
	Kyune 10:15 12:15,24	

leases 27:23	live 17:11 34:17 40:5 41:15 43:3 44:22 48:2 62:24 64:5 65:13 74:19	love 29:17
leave 58:10		low 74:4 78:8
Lee 5:13 23:6 83:5		
left 66:10 72:16,17	lived 54:5	
legal 31:1	lives 69:20	
legally 28:22	living 42:22 75:24	
legitimate 31:12	loaded 11:10	
lek 17:9	loads 70:21	
Leland 10:14 12:8,23	local 2:5 35:12 41:15 43:9 56:18,24 57:23,25 58:12,13,19 64:6 72:14	
level 38:5	located 2:22 13:23 38:8	
levels 27:10,25 28:19	locomotive 17:13	
levitate 70:6	logical 63:13	
libraries 83:13	logically 28:4	
library 55:8	logistically 11:18	
lied 81:5	long 12:17 13:7 14:4 21:8 22:4 36:1,9 37:25 39:20 40:1 46:11,12 72:24 77:8	
life 42:12,13 47:20 62:21 76:9	long-term 44:21 48:13, 25 54:3	
life-long 47:22	longer 21:9 25:19	
light 27:14	looked 26:2 75:19	
limit 80:14	looming 27:5,6	
limited 57:1,2	Los 27:10	
limiting 3:15	lose 47:17	
lines 7:24 9:7 53:25	loss 48:17,20 49:1,6,15, 17,19	
link 21:2,17	losses 48:15	
list 24:1,18 50:18	lost 45:25 48:5 62:20	
listed 16:25	lot 30:19,20 32:25 42:4 44:25 45:8,15,21 51:15, 19 52:2 61:15 68:7 71:17,19 78:14,25 82:12	
listen 3:11 51:2		
listened 47:9,10		
listening 64:13 81:11		
listing 69:12		
literally 80:4		

M

machinery 11:1

made 2:19 24:3 37:21
64:22 70:24

mail 82:24 83:3

mailed 23:9

mailing 23:3

main 5:4 26:21 27:24
71:19 72:7

Maine 42:1

maintain 12:12 13:6
37:17 54:13

major 7:9 8:15 16:2
39:23 77:7

majority 35:15 41:15

make 3:6 5:4,15 15:7,24
20:10 24:5 28:19 30:13
33:6 43:21 44:6 59:9
60:14 63:13 68:24 75:3,
12 76:20 77:5,16,17
82:19

makes 15:11 28:22 59:19
61:17

making 10:4 69:19

Malin 26:12,17 73:18

managed 12:18 13:8
17:2

management 9:23 12:20
13:9 14:2 17:5 18:15
34:24

Management's 18:16

manager 2:15 3:22 5:25

6:10	members 41:14,18	11 45:13
manufacturing 35:20 51:16 54:19	mentality 47:13	moderators 41:13
map 12:6 20:20	mention 30:9	Moench 26:12,13,16,18 28:12 55:12 73:18,20,23
maps 11:24 25:24 46:5	mentioned 8:25 53:8	moisture 38:15
market 11:4,6 35:3 53:6 57:2,6,8 58:3 73:15	merits 9:11	Mold 44:11,12,15 46:16 81:19,21
marketing 34:18,20,23	message 2:23 4:22 23:22 44:6 50:8 75:5 77:18	moment 11:25
markets 10:23 35:2,11 52:22 53:1 57:11	Metropolitan 52:13	monetary 74:6
massive 69:25 74:15	middle 80:19	money 31:15,16 32:15 64:16,19,20,24 69:1,5,7, 9 78:15
material 11:1	Mike 64:3,8,18	monies 57:24 64:19 71:5
materials 49:9	mile 38:9	monopolize 57:4
matter 69:16,22	miles 12:17 13:7 14:4	month 62:19
Mccann 72:12	million 63:11 69:2 74:8, 10,12	moose 29:19 68:14
Mckee 64:8,18 75:12,16	millions 43:8 72:15 82:3	mortality 49:3
means 42:11 57:22,25 61:15 70:8 71:22	mine 31:1	mountain 30:15
measures 14:23 15:9 19:22,24 20:2,3,4,6,7,8	mineral 11:2 57:24	mountainous 11:16
media 3:21,23	Mini 13:20 19:9 55:16	mountains 12:12 82:2
meet 6:15 57:19,25 63:19	minimal 52:22	move 7:4 17:15 40:1 47:25
meeting 2:7,8,17,22,23, 25 3:5,6,7,10,11,16,17, 19 4:1,2,11,14,15,21,22 5:6,21 6:18 7:5,17,19 22:15,23,24,25 23:20,23 29:3 44:8 50:7 51:1 56:7 82:21 83:15	minimize 13:25 17:8 19:4,8,15 36:19 53:3	moved 35:16
meetings 2:20 6:14 8:21 14:15 15:2 22:9,12,13 47:9 80:10 81:8,11,12	mining 30:12	movement 46:4 49:3 52:18,24,25
Melissa 29:1,2,8,12 31:23 59:13 62:22	minutes 24:4 25:9 26:5, 15 29:11 32:12 34:12 37:7 39:13 41:8 44:14 50:23,25 52:11 53:23 59:11 62:4 66:24 67:22 73:22 75:15	moving 40:9 67:13
member 29:13 60:5 73:8	misled 81:5	multiple 78:21
	mispronounce 26:11	muted 50:13
	mitigate 19:22 58:17	mutts 3:18
	mitigating 8:17	Myton 10:13 12:8,23 13:2
	mitigation 14:23 15:9 19:22,24 20:2,3,4,6,7,8,	

N	noted 57:14	43:14 44:22 46:22 51:5
	notice 14:11	57:6 59:21 60:12 61:8,11
national 9:17 11:11	notions 69:23	62:9 63:22 65:5 67:12,13
18:11 27:7 35:9 53:11	Nufill 72:11	69:17,19 70:5,7 71:5,17,
57:10	number 3:6,7,11 17:14	21,23 73:8 78:6,7
native 52:15	21:20,21 49:7 66:6,7	oil's 51:10
natural 34:19 53:15 67:3	78:24	oil-independent 62:11
nature 29:17 56:23	numbers 37:14,16	ongoing 22:11
neck 42:7	numerous 56:18 71:20	online 2:7,8,17,19,24
needed 48:22		4:2,10 5:20 6:16 7:19
negative 17:22 49:21,23	O	15:2 22:12,13,23,24
negatively 47:19	Obama 25:14	23:19 47:9 82:21
negotiating 25:21	objection 37:18	open 42:4 46:18 51:15
negotiations 26:1	observation 54:2	72:20 80:6
neighbor 29:20 30:18	obtain 15:19	operate 10:11 11:8,19
NEPA 9:18 11:12 28:12	occur 12:3	12:4 14:6 15:14,15 22:1
nesting 60:24	October 15:3 21:24 22:4	operated 56:13
Network 10:19	OEA 2:7,13 4:4 5:15	operation 7:24 9:7,9 10:5
neutral 2:12	9:14,17,19 11:17 14:11,	16:6 35:15 36:5
Newstalk 64:4	12,15,17,19,22 15:5,7	operations 17:24 18:22
nitrous 27:13,18	18:20 19:1,12,21 20:2,10	27:16 34:19 36:16 48:20
No-action 12:3 26:22	22:21	operator 36:6
52:16	OEA's 14:24 15:10 18:25	operators 27:24
noise 16:8 17:10,12,15,	off-grid 29:14	opinion 58:17 65:1
16 33:12 45:19	offer 35:1	opinions 35:4,5 37:22
noisy 51:24	offers 76:7	64:14
nonattainment 27:8,22	office 2:6,16 6:1,9 8:1	opportunities 35:19
28:7	9:13,14 10:1 59:17	42:25
nonprofit 41:11	offices 58:3	opportunity 4:19 37:13
nonrenewable 49:16	officials 4:19 7:2 79:13	39:25 43:13 56:18 62:14
north 13:17,19,23 57:3	Ogden 57:17	63:7 65:3,4 68:23
79:1	oil 10:22 11:5 27:1,16,24	oppose 32:14 54:25
note 3:6 47:16	28:2,7 31:14 34:23,24	63:15 80:16
	35:16 38:4 41:23 42:18	opposed 45:1 47:11
		78:12,13 79:23,24 82:15,
		16

opposing 53:25 65:12	5	59:1 65:22,23,24 66:2
opposite 35:17	pandemic 22:11	PDF 21:11
opposition 60:7	paperwork 63:6	peace 29:17
option 23:3 76:13	parallel 13:16	peak 27:10
options 22:20 76:2	paralleling 12:10	peck 29:2,5,6,8,9,12,13 31:4,18,23,25 32:2,7 59:4,7,8,13 61:14 62:22
oral 4:7,12,20 5:1,5,23 22:8,22 23:21 66:6,13, 14,15 75:3,9 77:16,17 82:19	parcels 48:18	people 6:19,20 17:11 29:16 43:2,6,19,20 48:8 51:2,10,16,22 60:10 61:3 62:16,20,24 67:5 71:18 72:7,20 74:17,19 78:8,11 79:9 80:21 81:23
orally 82:22	Park 11:23 13:14,17,19, 23 14:3,7,24 16:21 17:7, 19 18:9 19:2,7,15 30:1 60:23	people's 53:10 62:12 63:22
order 4:18 13:25 60:13	part 14:16 23:19 37:24 38:12,24 42:13,21 55:1 72:1 78:6 82:4	percent 27:16,17 55:2 75:17 76:14
organizations 56:15	participant 24:24	Performed 36:18
Ouray 18:12	participants 3:18	period 5:8 8:21 15:2,4,7 22:3,10 40:1 83:9
outsiders 48:8	participate 35:10 80:11	permanent 48:15,17,18, 20,21 49:6,21,22 69:12, 18 74:9,12
oversight 9:5	participated 47:8	permanently 16:19,21 33:9 60:2
overview 4:4 7:6 8:3,7,24	participating 2:10 32:4 82:21	permits 15:19,22 28:8 50:18
owned 12:17 55:3 56:13	participation 2:24 7:16 23:12 83:14	permitted 80:11
owner 44:24 70:21	particulate 40:10	person 2:25 5:19 6:14
owner/operator 41:10	parties 4:7	personally 68:4
owners 38:7 56:19 82:12	parts 4:3 18:16	perspective 67:1
oxide 27:13,18	passionate 55:7 81:24	petition 21:25 60:6 63:15
ozone 27:8,9,11,12,20, 21,22 28:4,19,20	Password 3:8 44:8 56:7	phase 58:7
P	past 45:15 47:15 57:18 60:18	phone 3:6,7 6:22 40:24 59:6
p.m. 2:1,5 83:16	path 35:9 69:21	
Pacific 10:14 12:15,24 25:22	pay 42:1 74:20 79:6 81:1	
paid 51:20 55:8	payer 54:14	
paleontological 16:10 49:20	payers 79:8	
Pamela 43:23,24,25 44:2,3,4 50:6 61:23 62:1,	PC 24:21,23,25 50:10,12, 13 56:2,3,4 58:23,24	

phonetic 72:11,12
Physicians 26:20
picture 21:10 29:20
 65:18 71:9
piece 55:7 78:19
pig 54:6,8
Piggott 2:4,11 23:18
 24:15,17,20 25:8 26:3,8,
 14 28:10,24 29:7,10
 31:2,17,20 32:1,5,8,11
 33:23 34:5,11 36:17,25
 37:6 38:18 39:4,7,12
 40:16 41:7 43:10,22
 44:13 46:14 47:3 49:13,
 25 50:3,22 52:5,10
 53:17,22 55:15,24 58:14,
 21 59:5,10 61:13,21 62:3
 63:24 64:1 65:22 66:23
 67:16,21 68:18 71:1,10
 73:1,21 74:25 75:13
 76:16 77:13 79:18 81:17
 82:17
pilot 67:1
pinpoint 46:9
pipeline 42:18,19 67:2
 78:7
pipelines 42:14,15
place 21:12 56:21
places 45:3,24 65:9 67:8
placing 57:4
plaguing 74:22
plains 48:22
plan 28:9 69:10
planning 80:9
plans 45:12
plant 49:7

plants 70:1
play 7:5 27:4
plowing 31:9
pockets 30:17,19
point 3:10 26:21 27:12,
 15,24 30:6 73:23 74:1
 78:22 80:15 82:7
points 10:13 12:7,22,25
 59:9 75:22
poisoning 33:4
Policy 9:18,25 11:11
polluted 32:25
pollution 33:2 45:19
 51:19 54:20 55:19 70:4
 71:18,19 73:13 74:18
ponds 45:9
pools 27:13
population 31:10 48:7
 57:15 65:20
populations 49:4
portion 7:4 80:25
positive 17:22
possibility 60:16 62:13
 76:25
possibly 36:23
postmarked 22:7 83:8
potential 9:11 11:15 12:2
 14:21 16:3 30:19 45:11
potentially 10:25 80:7
power 76:25
practical 11:18
precursor 28:4
precursors 27:21

prefer 23:4
preferred 14:7,25 19:3
preliminarily 19:2,12
preliminary 8:16 14:22,
 25 19:18 20:3,6
prepare 14:12 15:5
prepared 7:22 14:19
preparing 82:25
preregister 4:20
preregistered 24:3,12
presence 35:18
present 11:24
presentation 2:18 4:12
 5:15 7:5,11,18 8:2,6
 22:17 23:11 25:11
presented 19:19
presenting 75:7
presents 15:22
Preservation 60:5
president 56:15 59:16,
 17,18 62:23
press 4:24 23:25 40:20
 41:1 50:9 66:15 75:6
 77:19
pretty 46:8 51:25 68:1
prevention 45:13
previous 66:19 69:11
previously 4:11
price 40:5 46:19 51:17
 57:6 62:24 67:4 70:25
prices 42:9
primarily 10:21
primary 35:12 40:3 56:24
 58:9

prior 47:9 64:9	programs 3:14 41:12	prospering 80:24
privacy 45:25	progress 36:1	protected 17:5
private 12:20 13:9 18:5,8 29:15 30:24 48:18 53:9, 10 54:13 55:2,5,17 69:8, 16,24,25 71:5 78:13	project 2:15 3:22 4:5 5:3, 10,16,17,25 6:9 7:12 8:11,12,19,25 10:9 14:10,15 20:16 21:13,17 23:1,2,14 28:13,15 30:7 35:8 36:22 47:10,17,18, 21 48:5,9,13 52:20 55:22,23 59:19,22 60:9 61:20 65:2 69:10,13 70:11 71:9 81:7,9,10 82:23 83:2,12,14	protecting 3:2
private-owned 62:13	project-related 20:22	protection 6:7
privately 52:20	projected 57:20	provide 3:1 4:4,7,20 5:1, 2,22,23 8:2 10:17,19 20:25 23:21 36:3 46:22 53:2 57:22 61:25 65:15 66:6,14,15,22,25
prizes 57:4	projects 28:7 64:25	provided 56:17 66:13
problem 78:6 81:16	pronounce 26:17	providing 8:7 35:2
problems 46:19 54:7 58:18 72:13,14 74:18	properties 69:20 82:3,5	Provo 57:17
process 4:5 5:18 7:8 8:3, 14 13:11 14:9,10 20:14 23:13,16 80:1,8,14 81:3	property 38:2,7,8 44:24 47:19 55:2,5,17 62:7 63:22 78:14 82:12	public 2:7,8,17,19,24 3:5 4:2,10 5:20 6:14 7:19 8:21 9:25 14:13,15 15:1, 2,4 18:5 20:9 21:2 22:3, 9,12,13,15,16,23,24 23:19 32:15 47:9 48:15 52:20 53:11 63:8 65:1 71:5 80:10 81:5 82:21
produce 61:14,16	proponents 27:2	public's 69:7
produced 10:22 11:5 36:10 57:12	proposal 9:11 32:20	published 15:3 75:9
producers 57:1,9	proposals 9:16 47:2	Pueblo 25:23
producing 58:11	propose 52:16 82:1	purchasing 61:11
product 10:25 49:16 57:2,3	proposed 4:5 5:17 7:6 8:11,19,25 10:6,8,16,21, 24 11:3,9,13 12:4 15:14, 15,18 16:4 17:10,11,21 18:4 19:14,20,23 21:13 22:1 23:13 44:25 46:5 57:5 71:16 78:5	purpose 5:20 10:16
production 27:1,25 28:2, 3 32:17 33:6,21 38:4 53:1 54:23 55:17 70:7	proposes 10:11	pushing 59:15
productivity 48:15	proposing 67:6 78:3	put 32:14 37:17 57:7 63:12 68:4,15 69:9 78:14
products 11:2 35:17 70:22	proppant 11:1	putting 31:15
proeconomic 47:1 82:14	pros 44:17	
professional 34:15 35:1		
professionals 36:21 41:19		
Profitability 69:24		
profits 69:16		

Q

quadrupling 27:1 28:3
quality 16:9 27:7 42:22
45:18 49:23
queries 3:23

question 25:16,17,19
65:11

question-and-answer
4:13

questions 25:12,17

quick 66:22 76:8

quiet 29:17 47:20 69:21

R

radio 56:13

rail 7:24 9:7 10:12,15,16,
17,18,21,24 11:3,4,9,15
12:5,15,24 14:6 15:14,
15,18 16:4,6 17:10,12,
14,15,21,24 18:4,22
19:14,21 22:1 26:2 35:9,
16,18 37:17,19 38:1,9,24
39:2,19 42:1,11 52:19
58:2 61:7 65:9,11 67:13
70:23,24 72:5,6,8

railcar 42:17

railroad 9:5,10,16 10:15
12:15 25:14 36:2,6,15
41:17 51:6,14,20,24
59:24 60:1,3,7 68:8 79:6,
15 81:16

railroads 9:5

rails 71:16

railway 2:9 6:10 7:7,20
9:3 10:6,7 11:14 20:18
21:17,20 23:14 25:21
26:25 28:1,18 32:16,19,
20 33:1,5,9,20 35:8
36:12 39:23 42:4 45:1,17
46:1,17,20,22 48:1 51:3
54:12,25 57:9 58:17
62:25 63:1,3,11,17 69:3,
6,22 73:9 75:18 78:5,12

79:25 80:16 82:1,16

railways 57:5

rains 38:13

raise 4:22,23,24 23:23,25
38:5 40:20,25 41:1 44:5
50:8 66:11,12 75:5,6
77:18,19,20

raised 24:9 29:3 31:23
40:22 50:10,17 56:9
58:24 59:2 66:7 67:18
68:20 71:11 73:19 75:11
76:18 77:21 79:20 81:19

ran 30:18

ranches 13:20 19:10
55:16 69:20 78:16

ranching 18:3 73:8

range 16:5

rates 9:5

reached 3:24 23:19

reaching 27:9

read 42:15 48:9 69:4
73:4

reads 73:5

ready 76:11

real 31:12 46:9 66:22
76:8,24

realignments 48:24

realize 77:10 78:11,20

reason 31:11,14 53:5
61:1 70:24

reasonable 11:13,17

reasons 19:12 60:20

receive 4:12,25 5:4,23
75:9 82:24

received 15:6 64:20 73:3
83:8

receiving 14:16 23:14

recognize 35:24

recommend 3:14

recommendation 19:18

recommendations 8:17
15:8,11 20:10

recommended 15:9
20:4,8

recommending 19:13
20:2

recommends 19:21

record 4:8 15:10 24:6
53:25 54:24 59:12 75:14

recorded 2:18 4:16

Records 21:18

recovering 38:23

recreation 16:11 48:16

Redmond 52:7,9,12

reduced 34:2 59:19
73:14,15

reduction 48:18

Reed 34:7,14 39:16

Reese 24:8,11,16,22,23
25:2 50:5,6

refer 23:8

reference 69:11

references 69:4

referencing 70:3

referred 11:21

refers 17:12

refineries 57:4

reflected 27:15	represent 35:5	79:14
refund 63:16	representative 64:11	responsible 9:15 10:4
refused 72:5	representatives 3:21	27:16
region's 28:14	6:24 7:1	restricts 3:19
regional 34:19	request 14:5 15:13 63:16	result 16:17 28:1
register 22:14,25	requested 14:13 66:10	resulting 49:2
registered 4:18 23:21	requesting 63:20	results 76:23
25:2 26:10 40:23 41:3	requests 3:24	retail 56:18
43:23 44:10 61:25	require 13:6 28:6	retirement 65:15
regulatory 9:4	required 48:7 63:19	return 36:4,23 63:11
Reid 67:23	73:14	64:23
reiterate 6:12	requirements 63:20	returned 64:21
related 9:18 35:17 39:18	requires 11:12 28:12,14	revenue 17:25 37:15
relating 18:22	research 60:25	73:13
relevant 45:23	researching 81:10	review 4:5,9 6:25 7:8 8:3,
relook 72:22	Reservation 18:12	14,20 9:15,21 14:9 16:1
rely 63:2	residence 17:19	20:14,21,24 22:3,18
remainder 23:16	residences 13:21 17:17	23:13 28:8
remaining 28:11 31:3	18:2	rich 69:19
33:24 36:17 38:19 43:11	resident 39:16 41:10	richer 69:19
46:15 75:3 77:16	44:15 48:4 54:3 73:7	rid 29:23 31:11 42:6
remarks 6:2	residential 19:9	72:14
remember 4:15 83:11	residents 17:18 37:11,	ride 45:6
remind 40:8	13,24 38:3 47:22 65:4	rights 15:19,22 25:21
reminder 24:4	69:15	69:22
removal 49:11	resolution 81:14	Rio 64:11,12
removed 63:5	resource 8:14 16:5 18:19	risk 27:3
rent 62:18	28:8	risks 71:24
repaid 69:6	resources 16:7,10,11,17	River 34:1
report 55:3	18:23,24 19:8 48:19	roadless 18:10
reported 25:20	49:1,10,17,18,19,20	roads 31:6,7 70:9,11
REPORTER 33:25	56:25 60:15 78:3	71:20
	respond 15:6	Robinson 39:9,10,14
	responsibility 76:21 78:2	40:18,19,21 50:6

Rockies 34:22	Salt 42:1,2,24 57:3,16 65:10	semitrucks 51:18
Roger 31:22 32:2,3 59:8, 13	sand 11:1 60:13	send 4:21 23:4,22 44:6 50:8 61:8,9 77:18
role 8:7	save 65:15	sending 61:16
room 57:19,21	saved 55:6	senior 52:13
Roosevelt 42:2	scar 31:5	sense 61:17 63:14
route 10:19 12:6,10,11, 25 13:2,16,18 26:1 29:23 31:12,13 38:10 39:2 43:18 47:2 60:22 61:5 63:4,6,8,12 67:5 75:22 81:15 82:9	scarce 30:21 54:4 78:22	separated 58:9
routes 11:15 44:25 45:2 46:5 80:2,3 82:16	scary 30:16	serve 2:11 36:9
rugged 13:6	schedule 15:1	served 56:14
ruin 68:12	scheduled 22:5	service 9:6,23 10:17 12:19 35:18 37:15 56:15
ruining 74:19	schools 55:9 79:2,3	services 31:8 35:1 39:19 55:10 58:2 81:2
rules 4:10	SCIC 59:14 63:17	session 4:6,13 23:20
run 30:16 31:16 38:9 39:20 40:1 41:11 54:13 78:5	scientifically 49:19	set 20:4 38:21
running 3:17 42:8	scope 14:17,18	sets 14:22 15:1
runoff 38:13	scoping 14:10,12,16,19	severance 48:18
rural 37:15 49:24 54:15 65:11	screen 2:23	share 5:17,21 64:14
S		
safe 6:6 12:12 13:7	screenshot 20:15	shed 28:14
safer 42:11 71:22	screw 68:2	shift 58:11
safest 43:18	scrimped 55:6	ship 27:4 51:17 70:23
safety 16:6 18:22,23	search 20:17 21:14,18, 21	shipper 36:3
sage 60:22,24 67:10	seat 80:8	shippers 10:19 36:8
sage-grouse 14:1 17:4,9 19:9 29:22,25 30:2,4	seconds 28:10 31:2 33:23 36:17 38:18 43:10 46:14 49:13 55:15 58:14 61:13 63:24 71:1	Shipping 51:15
	secret 41:21	short 39:21 45:15
	seeking 21:25	Short- 48:25
	seismic 16:8	short-term 48:12
	seldom 42:16	shoved 80:4
	selling 57:3	shoving 80:18
	semi 70:21	show 4:11 28:19 64:5
		shown 22:13 25:23 63:18
		shows 12:6 50:13

shut 77:1 80:13	solve 46:18 54:6	springs 30:21 45:9 68:3
sic 41:17 43:19	sorts 47:25	stabilize 57:8
side 68:11	source 56:24	stable 58:6 74:21
signatures 60:7	south 10:13 12:7,13,23 13:1,17,22 30:1	stagnant 41:22 72:24
significant 16:14 80:25	southern 54:4	standard 27:7,21 28:20 63:23
silly 51:5	southwest 12:9	standards 33:3
similar 13:14 75:21 81:24,25	spark 33:16	standpoint 37:11
simply 48:11 57:18	spark-generating 38:24	stands 47:17
sister 34:23	sparks 33:15	Stangel 64:3
sites 49:18	speak 4:19 23:22 39:6 66:10	Stangel's 68:25
sitting 72:23	speaker 24:7,12,18 25:2 26:11 29:1 31:22 32:8 34:7 37:2 39:9 41:4 43:23 44:10 47:5 50:17, 19 52:7 53:19 56:1	star 4:24 23:25 40:20 41:1 50:9 66:15 75:6 77:20
skip 48:10	speakers 50:12	start 2:6 7:18 8:7 24:5 51:16
skipped 41:25	speaking 25:1 26:20	started 39:23 45:15
slide 4:2 22:14	specialist 6:8	state 9:21,25 12:19 13:9 17:2,6 18:7 24:6 28:8 52:13 54:11 55:4 56:22 58:1,12 59:11 61:8 73:12 75:14
slowed 46:23	species 16:24 17:1,4,7 49:7,8	stated 4:11 36:12 47:21 79:6
small 30:22 42:5	specifically 18:20	statement 2:9 5:22 6:11 7:10,20,21 20:18 28:23 37:22,24 52:17
smallest 16:21	speculation 55:20	statements 37:21
smoke 33:12	spend 74:8,14	States 10:23 74:7
snow 27:15	spent 32:15 43:8 70:14 72:12 74:9,11 81:9	stating 54:24
social 58:18	spilling 42:18 71:21	stations 56:13
socioeconomic 17:22,25	spills 33:14	statistics 58:12
socioeconomics 16:11	spoken 47:16,21 66:18	status 25:25
soft 59:6	sponsored 7:12 10:8	stay 72:18 75:8
soften 73:10	spots 45:21	
soil 30:14 49:15	spring 38:13	
soils 16:7		
solar 53:2 74:12,15		
sold 71:4 72:11,17		
Soldier 68:8		
solutions 44:21		

staying 6:5	substantially 38:11	system 35:9 57:11
stays 71:19	substantive 83:8	
STB 21:18 63:7 81:12	succeed 73:20 76:1	T
stb.gov 21:14	succeeding 80:25	table 60:16 63:13 80:9
steaming 27:5	success 49:5 56:3	takes 30:13
steel 11:1	suffering 43:7	taking 39:2 54:17
step 14:9 36:1	suggested 54:1	talk 72:10 77:7
Steve 56:12 73:17	suited 74:16	talking 54:21
stream 38:15 48:23,24	summary 14:8	tar 60:13
streaming 3:15	summer 17:9	tax 17:25 37:14 38:2
strong 35:7 44:18	Summit 34:19 35:5 68:9	54:14 73:13 79:8,16 81:1
structure 49:9	support 20:23 35:8 36:15	taxes 38:3 55:8,11 57:24
struggle 51:10	40:7 47:1,10,18 48:9	ten 55:2 79:5,7
struggles 46:21	62:10,17 65:2 73:9,16	Teri 32:9,13
struggling 43:7 57:17	74:9,11,12 80:25 81:6	term 36:1 37:25 39:21
76:12	supporting 2:13 35:23	46:11,12
studies 27:11,15	supportive 76:14	terminus 10:13 12:7,22
studio 64:9	supposed 61:4	terrain 11:16 13:6
study 14:17,18 30:3	surface 2:6,15 5:12,25	Terry 41:9 71:11,13
55:13 74:6,7 80:1	6:8 7:7,22 8:1,8 9:1	thing 6:12 31:14 47:14
studying 52:13,15 74:3	16:16,20 17:16 21:14	51:8,21 63:3,15 75:21
stuff 42:3 50:25 51:16	23:5,12 48:21 49:10 83:4	things 30:12 33:6 46:10
72:9,19	surprised 51:2	51:11 64:15,16 67:11
subcontract 54:12	surround 12:13	72:7 74:3
subject 36:3,15 74:3	surrounding 49:24 79:13	thinking 54:19
submit 5:7,9 8:4,22 21:9	surrounds 11:16	third-party 2:13
22:8,19,22 23:1 83:1	surveys 20:22	Thirdly 38:6
submitted 22:7 63:7	survival 36:1	Thirty 28:10 31:2 33:23
82:22	suspend 50:2	38:18 43:10 46:14 49:13
submitting 22:20	sustain 53:6	55:15 58:14 61:13 63:24
substance 58:15	sustainability 41:23	71:1
substantial 64:23	sustainable 52:25	thought 54:5,9 73:23
	swamps 74:4	thousands 72:12

threat 33:18	track 49:9	trucked 70:7
threaten 34:1	trade 34:20	trucking 10:20 70:3
threatened 16:25	traditional 53:3	trucks 40:13 70:9,10 71:21
threatening 4:17	traffic 11:3 40:9 42:21 71:15 73:14	true 30:4 40:6
threatens 29:22	trailer 68:4	Trump 59:16,18
thresholds 17:17	train 17:13 33:11,16 70:5	trust 18:11
throat 80:19	trains 10:23 11:8,10 17:14 40:11 70:7	truthful 81:6
throats 80:5	transcribed 2:18 4:16	tuned 6:21
thumb 42:7	transition 35:21,24 36:11,13,14	tunnel 30:7,13 38:11 46:1
time 2:5 4:25 6:19,23 24:2 31:17 36:6 37:19 39:4,6,15 40:1 45:16,21 48:1 49:25 50:18 61:19 65:23 66:10 72:15 75:3,9 76:12 77:15 78:14	transloading 70:12	tunnels 12:11 13:6 14:4
times 6:6 22:13 40:5 45:23 70:8	transparent 63:17	turbines 53:1
timing 35:22	transport 10:22 57:1,10 58:1 73:15	turn 13:3 14:8 58:13
tired 75:25	transportation 2:6,15 5:12 6:1,8 7:8,22 8:1,8 9:1,11 17:16 21:15 23:5, 12 42:12 58:5 61:2 71:23 83:4	two-lane 31:7
Titanic 27:3	trapped 27:13	type 21:5 37:12 55:5 79:11
today 35:4 60:7 64:18	travel 55:18	types 70:16 79:5
today's 5:15 22:17,23 23:10	traversing 12:12	typical 3:5
toll-free 44:7	tribal 17:2 18:5,11 49:18	U
ton 51:15	Tribe 12:18 18:21	U.S. 9:23 12:18 61:11 82:24
tonight 6:20,25 7:17 51:1	Tribe's 18:12	Uinta 2:8 6:10 7:7,19 9:2 10:6,7,13,18,22 11:5,14, 16 12:13,22 20:18 21:16, 20 23:13 25:20 26:25 27:8,11 28:18 32:24 33:4 34:15,16,21 35:8 36:9,12 37:12 39:17 44:16,19 46:12,17 47:14,22 48:4 52:2 53:14 54:18 56:13, 20 57:5,7,9,13,20,22 58:4,8,17 64:6 65:8 69:14 70:4,16 71:3 73:7 74:15,22 77:4 78:22
tonight's 7:5	trigger 27:2	
top 38:24	triple 74:16	
topics 4:1 14:14	tripling 27:1	
total 35:17	truancy 58:16	
totally 81:3	truck 40:9 42:2,21 55:18 70:21 71:15,18,19 73:14, 15	
touted 47:12		
touting 47:23		

81:23 82:15	unmuting 65:23	Vernal 56:16 75:17 79:13
uintabasinrailwayeis.com. 22:16	unprecedented 57:18	viable 10:20 36:2
Uintah 18:12	unsafe 59:20	vibration 16:9
ultra 27:14	unusable 45:4	video 3:19
unable 6:13	unused 25:22	view 20:20
unavoidable 16:17	unwilling 69:9	viewing 3:13
unclear 46:16	unwise 59:19	violence 58:16
undergraduate 52:13	updates 64:12	violet 27:14
understand 39:21 44:19, 20,21,23 46:11 72:1	upfront 80:6	Virginia 5:13 23:6 83:5
understanding 78:9	upload 21:6,10	virtually 5:19 6:15 34:16
undertake 28:21	upper 38:8	visit 36:24
Underwood 43:24 44:1,4 50:7 61:23 62:2,5,6 63:25	upset 67:8	visual 16:11 49:23
unintended 54:8	upsetting 67:10	VOC 27:17
Union 10:14 12:15,24 25:22	user 24:10,21,22 29:4 40:20 41:1 50:8 56:10 58:23,25 64:2 66:2,19 67:17,19 75:6,10	VOCS 27:13
United 10:23 74:7	users 4:24 23:24 24:10 66:14 77:19	voice 64:13 65:1
unknown 51:23	Utah 10:15 12:19 13:9 17:6 26:20 34:21 41:12 46:19 52:14 54:3,4 55:2 56:22	voices 80:14,16
unlike 72:4		volume 11:3
unloaded 11:10	Utah's 9:25 57:14	voluntary 19:23 20:1,7
unmute 3:20 24:11,22 25:5 26:12 29:4 31:24 32:9 34:8 37:3 41:5 43:25 44:2,3,5,11 50:11, 13,14,15,20 52:8 53:20 56:2,4,6,11 58:24 59:3 61:24 62:1 64:2 65:24,25 66:3,20 67:18 68:21 71:12 73:19 75:11 76:19 77:22 79:21 81:20	Ute 12:18 18:11,21	vote 61:20
unmuted 24:23,25 32:1 34:9 58:25 59:1 65:25 66:3 73:21		
	V	
	vacation 43:4	wandering 29:20
	vague 46:8	wanted 59:14 61:4,5,18 64:15 65:1 66:25 72:5 76:20 78:8
	values 48:21	wanting 37:12
	vegetation 16:24 48:25 49:12	Wasatch 34:18 57:16,19 78:24
	vehicle 16:5 18:22	waste 16:8
		watch 7:14
		water 16:6,17 19:8 30:20 33:4,19,20 34:24 38:6,10 45:9,10 46:3 48:19,22

49:10,15 54:4 63:21 68:2	widths 3:13	worse 33:6
waters 13:3 16:16,20 46:7 48:23	wife 38:7	worth 50:25 82:3
Wayland 2:14 3:23,24 5:12,25 6:3,7 7:25 23:5 25:11 83:4	wilderness 18:18 45:4 60:5	wreck 71:21
ways 22:18 53:16 68:7 76:1	wildfires 33:15,17	writing 5:9,11 82:23
wayside 17:12,15	wildlife 16:24 33:5,10,19 34:1 46:3 48:16 49:1,2,3, 12 63:21 68:13 70:1	written 5:2 22:6 23:2,4
wealthy 29:16 69:17	William 24:8,11,16,22,23 50:6	www. uintabasinrailwayeis. com 5:11 7:13 20:17 83:3,13
webinar 3:18 6:21 40:19, 25 66:11	wind 42:23 49:15 53:1 54:22	Y
website 5:3,10,16 7:12 20:16,19,21 21:1,14,15, 19 22:16 23:1,3 82:23 83:2,12	wind-powered 74:10	year 57:15 59:16 70:22 72:13 74:8
weekend 45:3	window 41:24 42:4	years 29:15 30:25 31:5 36:5 38:22 44:23 51:4,7, 21 56:14 62:7,9,18 71:20 74:23 79:5,7
well-being 53:12	winter 27:9,11 32:25 38:13	Z
Wellington 70:12	wishes 36:12	
wells 11:23 12:21 13:2,5, 24 16:18 17:20 18:13,15 19:6 45:9 54:2	woefully 26:22 52:16	
west 12:14 13:3	woes 47:14	
westward 12:9	wondering 81:23	Zoom 2:21 3:18 23:24 29:2 40:19 41:5 61:24 65:25 66:2,3,11,19
wetland 48:20	wooded 45:14	
wetlands 16:16,20 49:11	word 21:11	
what-if 77:7	work 7:25 8:25 43:13,18 44:22 57:12 58:10	
what-ifs 77:6,8 79:4	worked 46:10 62:8	
whatsoever 31:8 61:17	workforce 57:21 58:4	
wheels 17:13	working 6:24 8:9 9:19 81:14	
Whitmore 11:23 13:14, 17,19,22 14:3,7,24 16:20 17:7,19 18:9 19:2,7,15 29:25 30:8 38:10 54:1 60:23 61:6 63:4	works 9:17 75:22	
	world 76:9	
	worried 31:11 33:7 71:18	
	worries 24:17	
	worry 38:1 51:23	