

Submission Number: *UBR-DEIS-00451-0055*

EI-30636

Received: 1/27/2021 12:00:00 AM**Commenter:** David Grainger**Organization:****State:** Utah**Agency:** STB**Initiative:** Uinta Basin Railway EIS**Attachments:** No Attachments**Submission Text**

As a Utah citizen and voter, I respectfully urge your Board to wisely choose the no-action alternative for the ill-fated, poorly planned, proposed Uinta Basin Railway. This railway project has failed to consider myriad environmental recommendations, thus producing irreparable harm to our region's air, water, land and wildlife if constructed. Given the balance of pros and cons, this railway should not be built. The draft EPA's environmental impact statement assessing the project is a joke - it completely fails in its expectations. The EIS does little to actually analyze and describe the harm this oil railway could have on the environment, wildlife and nearby Utah communities. The new increased oil production enabled from the proposed railway expansion has no other alternative but to contribute irreversibly to increased greenhouse gas emissions. The Uinta Basin has one of the worst ozone hazard records in Utah - the climate is already at a tipping point. Priorities should be focused on reducing fossil fuel use instead of expanding it. The railway's emissions in transport roles will also further pollute the air in the Uinta Basin in Utah, which already exceeds federal air quality standards from already existing oil and gas development. In the poorly planned rail route, traversing Utah roadless areas, steep canyons and rugged wilderness terrain, the railway will degrade more than 10,000 acres of habitat for migratory wildlife, while harming important habitat needed by the rare greater sage grouse and the endangered Barnaby ridge-cress. The preferred proposed railway project route runs almost the entire length of Utah's Indian Canyon Creek, crossing and degrading more than 400 streams and important wetlands along the Price River - harming substantial semi-arid state's precious perennial waterways. Once in Colorado, the project could mean reopening a former rail line through scenic Tennessee Pass, despoiling scenic lands and wildlife habitat to get oil trains to the Gulf Coast. Mile-long oil trains could rip through sensitive areas like Browns Canyon, a rugged 22,000-acre national monument designated in 2015 to protect one of the wildest stretches of the Arkansas River. Finally the Uinta Basin Railway would harm people who live and recreate in both states. Landowners in Utah's Argyle Canyon and nearby off-grid canyon communities fear the disruptive noise, traffic delays, and clouds of diesel smoke oil that these trains will bring along the proposed routes. A significant potential for accidents, derailments, spills and even sparks that could ignite disastrous wildfires is well-recognized. And people in Colorado won't escape the air pollution drifting downwind from the Uinta Basin, even as the railway cuts through a national monument and other scenic areas supporting a vibrant outdoor tourism that many locals rely on for their livelihood. This railway project is an unacceptable threat to the health, safety and well-being of wildlife, humans and the planet. There is no balance in the risk-reward, and no justice in the biased EPA EIS. Please choose the no-action alternative to this environmental disaster.