

Received: 9/23/2015 12:00:00 AM

Commenter: George Price

Organization:

State: Montana

Agency: Surface Transportation Board

Initiative: Tongue River Railroad

Submission Text

George Price

11486 MT Hwy. 200, Dixon, Montana 59831

Thank you for this opportunity. My name is George Price. I live on the Flathead Indian Reservation, lived there for the last 30 years. I have been a teacher all of that time, 10 years as a high school teacher, three years at Salish Kootenai College, and the last 17 years in this wonderful institution right here [University of Montana] in Native American Studies and History.

I was asked to come here by the organization I belong to, the Indian People's Action of Montana. We don't speak for all native people of tribes everywhere, but we represent people from the seven reservations and 12 tribes resident in Montana. I speak for this organization, Indian People's Action, I speak for myself, and hopefully speak for life and love on earth, the living mother and all the biosphere of the earth. I hope to speak for her and all life here.

For Indian People's Action, it's a social justice and earth justice organization, and I help coordinate a lot of the environmental justice and protection activities and actions that we take. For that organization I speak to no action, STB, on this alternative.

For myself, I also hold that position, but I'd like to go directly to the larger reason, the climate. There are a lot of excellent presentations on the local Montana-based issues and the scientific issues known to everybody, the health effects, which we shouldn't have to say to everybody over and over again. That's known.

I'd like to speak for what's often unsaid, that this is much bigger than one state and affects all. My position is that it's not a money issue. If we measure this in terms of dollars and cents, we miss the whole point. There was some testimony in the film tonight from people whose ancestors have been here, farming and ranching for three or four generations, a hundred years. I don't take that lightly. That's a deep relationship, and it's an ongoing relationship.

As Indian People's Action, we speak for people whose roots are thousands of years here, and lived 900 years without currency, without money, with a direct relationship with the earth.

I would like to say in closing that if you begin this fight against the earth from the premise, "let's see if we can first maintain our way of life and all of our consumption and put band aids on the situation that will allow us to do that", then we're sunk. We have to think of earth first and all the beings that share it with us.

Thank you.