

Submission Number: *UBR-DEIS-00504*

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Organization:

State: Ohio

Agency: STB

Initiative: Uinta Basin Railway EIS

Attachments: No Attachments

Submission Text

RE: THE PROPOSED UINTA BASIN RAILWAY PROJECT -- INTRO REMARKS: The proposed Uinta Basin Railway would be a train wreck for our air, wildlands, climate and communities. This multi-billion-dollar boondoggle would ruin more than 10,000 acres of habitat for migratory wildlife and endangered species while worsening the climate crisis. TARGETED COMMENTS: ? Increase in Uinta Basin Oil Production ?- The EIS must consider the increase in production of fossil fuels that will be a direct result of the railway operations. The railway could increase oil production in the Uinta Basin by up to four times the current level. The EIS needs to consider the full impact that the new exploration, drilling, production and eventual combustion of fossil fuels will have on the environment, wildlife, and nearby communities. ? Climate Change ?- The proposed railway is intended to facilitate the vast expansion of oil, gas, and other fossil fuels in the Uinta Basin to distant markets.. Without the railway, these fuels have nowhere to be sold, and thus, cannot be developed. This increase in oil production --potentially four times the current amount-- will contribute irreversibly to greenhouse gas emissions and climate change. Our climate is already at a tipping point, we must not allow an expansion of fossil fuel development on this scale. ? Air Quality ?- Air pollution in the Uinta Basin already exceeds federal standards because of existing oil and gas development in the region -- by increasing oil and gas development, this project would make it worse. ? Wildlife? ?-? The proposed route of the Uinta Basin Railway traverses roadless areas, steep canyons, and rugged terrain. Over 10,000 acres of big game habitat will be affected by the railroad. Some of this area has been designated as crucial big game habitat by the U.S. Forest Service. The route also impacts the 1600 acres of Greater sage grouse habitat, and areas inhabited by the endangered Barnaby ridge-cress. ? Water - ?The preferred project alignment would run almost the entire length of Indian Canyon Creek, affecting the entire area with 443 stream crossings, impacting over 61 miles of streams and 26 acres of floodplains. All the alternative routes connect to the existing railroad at the same spot: directly adjacent to important wetlands along the Price River. These are unacceptable impacts to the precious perennial waterways in our semi-arid state. ? Community -? The Uinta Basin Railway would change the way of life for those who live and recreate in the area. Landowners in Argyle Canyon and other off-grid canyon communities along the proposed railway route fear the disruption and disfigurement of the stunning landscapes they love. Each locomotive would disturb beloved wildlife, bringing noise and clouds of diesel smoke. Mile-long trains would create traffic delays and the real potential for accidents, derailments, spills and sparks, which could ignite disastrous wildfires. This is an unacceptable threat to community health, safety and well being.