

Dear Dr. Wayland,

I would like to voice my opposition to the Uinta Basin Railway proposal.

As I see it, the proposal has the following serious flaws:

- It would use public taxpayer funds to help develop the rail line, justified as improving the economy in Utah. Using public money to unfairly benefit one industry is wrong. This money could and should be spent on public needs that serve the greater good instead.

- It seeks to create additional markets for Utah oil, much of which would be pumped from oil wells on public land that were allowed through controversial low cost leases granted by the Trump administration. Utah's spectacular public lands should not be drilled and damaged by oil companies for profit at the expense of the greater public good. Again, one industry would benefit at the expense of the rest of Utah's economy, including its tourism and outdoor recreation economy.

- The impacts to public lands from oil drilling are huge and would increase tremendously in the future if the rail line and improved markets are created. Unparalleled natural landscapes, historical and cultural assets, entire ecosystems, air quality, wildlife populations, and the climate would be harmed. Climate impacts from oil drilling, fracking, and rail line operation have not been considered in the draft EIS.

- Environmental impacts from the rail line itself are significant. Potential routes for the line could cut through Native American reservation land and fragile roadless areas, impacting wildlife populations and ecosystem integrity, including protected wildlife like Canada Lynx, Spotted Owls and Sage Grouse. It was not clear that mitigation for these populations would be adequate.

- Once the damage is done to Utah's lands by the oil industry and oil is extracted and shipped out, the oil companies will leave, and Utah will be stuck with a land and water table damage to mitigate, loss of jobs, and only short term partial profits to show for it.

The Uinta Basin Rail Line proposal has been elevated even further into my attention by the announcement last week of an agreement between the Rio Grande Railroad and Union Pacific to reopen the Tennessee Pass Rail Line in Colorado, creating a potential short cut for the Uinta Basin crude oil transports as they make their way to refineries on the Gulf Coast.

I live in Buena Vista, Colorado, in the Arkansas River Valley. The Tennessee Pass Line, which has been abandoned for over 2 decades, runs right through the middle of Buena Vista, and through the newly created Browns Canyon National Monument along the Arkansas River. Browns Canyon is a central part of our local economy, and contains the most popular whitewater rafting section in the country. The Arkansas River also enjoys Gold Medal Trout Stream designation. Running a freight line through our valley would seriously disrupt the quality of life and the tourism economy in Buena Vista, and would degrade the environment and outdoor recreation experiences along the river. Impacts to Browns Canyon National Monument would be significant. Even one derailment could seriously impact water quality, the fishery, outdoor

recreation and the fragile riparian environment. To say nothing of the air quality degradation and noise pollution along the river, in the national monument, and adjacent to a wilderness study area that the railway would cause.

The potential impacts to the Arkansas Valley from the Uinta Basin Rail Line have spurred my immediate response to the call for comments on the EIS of this project. But aside from its impacts on neighboring states like Colorado, the Uinta Basin Railway raises serious concerns for Utah. I strongly recommend that the project be scrapped, so that it is not allowed to damage Utah's public lands, sensitive natural environments, long term economy, and the climate while benefiting only one industry.

Also, since the New Year's Eve announcement of the lease of the Tennessee Pass rail line adds a new dimension to the Uinta Basin Rail Line proposal, and the draft EIS constitutes a large amount of information to consider, I request that the comment period be extended by at least 60 days, so that more thorough study and specific comment on the draft EIS can be pursued.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Susan Greiner
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