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OEA

SERVICE DATE – JANUARY 28, 2021

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

NOTICE

Docket No. FD 36284

Seven County Infrastructure Coalition—Construction and Operation—in Utah, Carbon, Duchesne, and Uintah Counties, Utah

**Extension of Comment Period for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement**

The Surface Transportation Board's (Board) Office of Environmental Analysis (OEA) issued a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed Uinta Basin Railway in the above-captioned proceeding on October 30, 2020. The issuance of the Draft EIS initiated a 45-day public comment period and comments were originally due by December 14, 2020. On December 9, 2020, OEA announced that the comment period would be extended by 45 days until January 28, 2021. OEA is issuing this Notice to advise the public and all interested parties that the comment period will be extended again by an additional 15 days. Comments on the Draft EIS are now due by **February 12, 2021**. OEA will not be holding any additional public meetings during the extended comment period.

OEA is extending the comment period for the Draft EIS in response to a request from Eagle County, Colorado (Eagle County).<sup>1</sup> Eagle County states that the comment period should be extended due to a recent request in Docket No. FD 36471 from Colorado, Midlands & Pacific Railway Company (CMPR) for Board authority to lease and operate a rail line in Colorado known as the Tennessee Pass Line, which has had no rail traffic in more than 20 years. According to Eagle County, stakeholders in Colorado are concerned that rail traffic from the Uinta Basin Railway, including unit trains carrying crude oil, could travel on the Tennessee Pass Line if both the proposed construction and operation of the Uinta Basin Railway and the proposed lease and reactivation of the Tennessee Pass Line were to move forward. Eagle County requests an extension of the comment period to allow localities and other stakeholders along the Tennessee Pass Line to have the opportunity to evaluate potential impacts.

The Seven County Infrastructure Coalition (Coalition), the project applicant for the Uinta Basin Railway, and Rio Grande Pacific Corporation (Rio Grande), the proposed operator of the Uinta Basin Railway and the owner of CMPR, state that there are no plans to transport oil originating from the proposed Uinta Basin Railway on the Tennessee Pass Line.<sup>2</sup> According to

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<sup>1</sup> Eagle County Motion for Extension of Time and Petition for Reconsideration, Jan. 25, 2021, FD 36284.

<sup>2</sup> Coalition Reply Letter, Jan. 26, 2021, FD 36284; Rio Grande Verified Statement, Jan. 26, 2021, FD 36284.

Rio Grande and CMPR, the primary objective of the proposed lease and reactivation of the Tennessee Pass Line would be to provide passenger rail service, and it would not be practical or economical to transport oil on the Tennessee Pass Line.<sup>3</sup> OEA is nevertheless providing a 15-day comment period extension to allow Eagle County and other concerned stakeholders to further evaluate and comment on the Draft EIS for the proposed Uinta Basin Railway.

After the close of the extended comment period, OEA will prepare a Final EIS that responds to comments received on the Draft EIS. When deciding whether to authorize construction and operation of the proposed rail line, the Board will consider the Draft EIS, the Final EIS, and all timely environmental comments that are received. Any comments previously submitted on the Draft EIS do not need to be resubmitted.

Comments submitted by mail should be addressed to: Joshua Wayland, Surface Transportation Board, c/o ICF 9300 Lee Highway, Fairfax, VA 22031, Attention: Environmental filing, Docket No. FD 36284.

Comments may also be filed electronically on the Board-sponsored project website, [www.uintabasinrailwayeis.com](http://www.uintabasinrailwayeis.com).

Please refer to **Docket No. FD 36284** in all correspondence addressed to the Board. Comments on the Draft EIS are now due by **February 12, 2021**. For more information about the Board's environmental review process and the EIS, please visit the Board-sponsored project website at [www.uintabasinrailwayeis.com](http://www.uintabasinrailwayeis.com).

By the Board, Danielle Gosselin, Acting Director, Office of Environmental Analysis.

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<sup>3</sup> Rio Grande Verified Statement, Jan. 26, 2021, FD 36284; CMPR Reply Jan. 26, 2021, FD 36471.