

# UINTA BASIN RAILWAY

DOCKET NUMBER FD 36284

**DRAFT EIS**  
**PUBLIC MEETING**  
December 03, 2020

## ADVANCED REPORTING SOLUTIONS

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SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD  
UINTA BASIN RAILWAY  
DOCKET NUMBER FD 36284  
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT  
PUBLIC MEETING

-ooOoo-

Thursday, December 3, 2020

6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Reported by: Abigail D.W. Johnson, RPR, CRR, CRC

1 December 3, 2020 6:00 p.m.

2 P R O C E E D I N G S

3 -o0o-

4 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Ladies and gentlemen,  
5 the time is 6:00 p.m. local time. And we will now  
6 start the Surface Transportation Board Office of  
7 Environmental Analysis or OEA online public meeting.  
8 This online public meeting is for the Uinta Basin  
9 Railway Draft Environmental Impact Statement or EIS.

10 Thank you everyone for participating. My  
11 name is Jennifer Piggott, and I will serve as your  
12 neutral facilitator this evening. I am with ICF, who  
13 is supporting OEA as an independent third-party  
14 contractor. Also on the line is Josh Wayland, the EIS  
15 project manager with the Surface Transportation Board  
16 Office of Environmental Analysis.

17 This online public meeting is being  
18 recorded and transcribed. The same presentation will  
19 be made available at each of the six online public  
20 meetings.

21 If you need assistance with Zoom during the  
22 meeting, you can use the chat feature located at the  
23 bottom of your screen to message the meeting host. We  
24 appreciate your participation in this online public  
25 meeting. We would much rather be with you in person.

1 But with the current conditions, we want to provide all  
2 of the information we can while protecting everyone's  
3 health.

4 We are going to conduct this as closely as  
5 possible to a typical in-person public meeting. Please  
6 make note of the phone number of this meeting. The  
7 phone number is 877-853-5247, Meeting ID:  
8 874-8149-6515, Password: 05649357.

9 If you experience difficulty with your  
10 internet connection at any point during this meeting,  
11 you can call this number to listen to the meeting.  
12 Additionally, individual internet connections and band  
13 widths may impact your viewing experience this  
14 afternoon. We recommend closing all apps and programs  
15 and limiting other streaming or downloads during the  
16 meeting.

17 Finally, we're running this meeting using  
18 Zoom Webinar, which mutes all participants and  
19 restricts video feeds. Only the meeting host can  
20 unmute you.

21 For any media representatives that join  
22 this afternoon, please contact the EIS project manager,  
23 Josh Wayland, for any media queries or interview  
24 requests. Mr. Wayland can be reached at  
25 [joshua.wayland@stb.gov](mailto:joshua.wayland@stb.gov).

1           You can see the meeting topics on the  
2 slide. We will conduct the online public meeting in  
3 two parts.

4           First, OEA will provide an overview of the  
5 proposed project and the environmental review process  
6 followed by a facilitated comment session where  
7 interested parties can provide oral comments for the  
8 record.

9           Before we begin, I would like to review  
10 some ground rules for this evening's online public  
11 meeting. As previously stated, we will show a  
12 presentation and then receive oral comments. We will  
13 not host a question-and-answer session during this  
14 meeting.

15           Please remember the meeting is being  
16 recorded and transcribed, so no inappropriate or  
17 threatening language. Commenters will be called on in  
18 the order in which they registered with the elected  
19 officials given the opportunity to speak first. If you  
20 did not preregister to provide an oral comment at this  
21 evening's meeting and would like to do so, please send  
22 a chat message to the meeting host, raise your hand  
23 using the hand raise icon next to the name or for  
24 call-in only users press star 9 to raise your hand .  
25 We will receive as many comments as time allows.

1           If you are not called on to provide an oral  
2 comment this evening, you may provide a written comment  
3 electronically through the project website or through  
4 the mail. Again, we will make every effort to receive  
5 as many oral comments as possible during this evening's  
6 meeting.

7           Please submit comments by the close of the  
8 comment period, which is December 14th, 2020. We  
9 invite you to submit comments in writing via the  
10 Board-sponsored project website at  
11 [www.uintabasinrailwayeis.com](http://www.uintabasinrailwayeis.com) or in writing to Joshua  
12 Wayland, Surface Transportation Board, c/o ICF, 9300  
13 Lee Highway, Fairfax, Virginia, 22031, Attention:  
14 Environmental filing, Docket No. FD 36284.

15           OEA will make today's presentation  
16 available on the project website. We appreciate the  
17 chance to share the proposed project and environmental  
18 process with all of you. We wish we could be together  
19 in person, but we're glad to come together virtually.

20           Again, the purpose of this online public  
21 meeting is to share information about the Draft  
22 Environmental Impact Statement, provide information on  
23 how to provide comments and to receive oral comments.

24           Now I would like to introduce Joshua  
25 Wayland, the EIS project manager with the Surface

1 Transportation Board's Office of Environmental  
2 Analysis, for his welcome remarks. Josh?

3           JOSHUA WAYLAND: Hi, thank you Jennifer.  
4 Hello everyone, and thank you for joining us this  
5 evening. I hope you are all doing well and staying  
6 safe and healthy during these difficult times. My name  
7 again is Josh Wayland, I am an environmental protection  
8 specialist with the Surface Transportation Board's  
9 Office of Environmental Analysis. And I am the project  
10 manager for the Uinta Basin Railway Draft Environmental  
11 Impact Statement.

12           To reiterate one thing that Jennifer said,  
13 we are very sorry that we have been unable to be there  
14 with you in person for these public meetings, but we  
15 are glad to be able to meet with you virtually through  
16 this online format. And we're looking forward to  
17 hearing your comments a little bit later in the  
18 meeting.

19           I see that at this time we have 31 people  
20 joining us on the line tonight, including people who  
21 tuned in to the webinar and folks who have called in by  
22 phone.

23           At this time, I don't believe we have any  
24 representatives from the cooperating agencies working  
25 with us on this environmental review with us tonight,

1 but if there are any agency representatives or elected  
2 officials who have called in, welcome and thank you for  
3 attending.

4           Before we move into the comment portion of  
5 tonight's meeting, we would like to play a presentation  
6 for you that provides a brief overview of the proposed  
7 Uinta Basin Railway as well as the Surface  
8 Transportation Board's Environmental review process and  
9 some of the major conclusions of the Draft  
10 Environmental Impact Statement.

11           This presentation will be available on the  
12 Board's sponsored project website  
13 [www.uintabasinrailwayeis.com](http://www.uintabasinrailwayeis.com) in case you would like to  
14 download it and watch it again later.

15           With that, I would just like to thank  
16 everyone once again for their participation and for  
17 joining the meeting tonight and ask Jennifer to please  
18 go ahead and start the presentation. Hello and welcome  
19 to this online public meeting for the Uinta Basin  
20 Railway Draft Environmental Impact Statement. The  
21 Environmental Impact Statement, or EIS, is being  
22 prepared by the Surface Transportation Board, which is  
23 the federal agency that authorizes the construction and  
24 operation of new rail lines.

25           My name is Josh Wayland, and I work for the



1 Surface Transportation Board's Office of Environmental  
2 Analysis. In this presentation, I will provide a very  
3 brief overview of the environmental review process, the  
4 conclusions of the Draft EIS, and how you can submit  
5 your comments on the Draft EIS.

6 Here is the agenda for this presentation.  
7 I will start out by providing an overview of the role  
8 of my agency, the Surface Transportation Board, as well  
9 as the cooperating agencies that are working with us,  
10 the Seven County Infrastructure Coalition, which is the  
11 project applicant, and the Coalition's proposed  
12 project.

13 Next, I will discuss the environmental  
14 review process, including the different resource areas  
15 that we have analyzed in the Draft EIS, the major  
16 conclusions of the Draft EIS, and our preliminary  
17 recommendations for mitigating environmental impacts.

18 Then, I will discuss how to access more  
19 information about the proposed project and the  
20 environmental review. I will then discuss the comment  
21 period and the public meetings. And finally, I will  
22 explain how you can submit your comments on the Draft  
23 EIS.

24 Let's begin with an overview of the  
25 proposed project. As I mentioned earlier, I work for a

1 federal agency called the Surface Transportation Board.  
2 The Board is the lead agency for the Uinta Basin  
3 Railway EIS. It is a bi-partisan independent  
4 adjudicatory board with broad economic regulatory  
5 oversight over railroads, including railroad rates and  
6 service, as well as acquisition, abandonment,  
7 construction, and operation of rail lines.

8           When considering whether or not to  
9 authorize the construction and operation of a new line  
10 of railroad, the Board considers both the  
11 transportation merits of the proposal and the potential  
12 environmental impacts.

13           The Board's Office of Environmental  
14 Analysis, or OEA, is the office at the Board that is  
15 responsible for conducting the environmental review for  
16 new railroad construction proposals.

17           OEA works under the National Environmental  
18 Policy Act, or NEPA, as well as related environmental  
19 laws. In this case, OEA is working with five  
20 cooperating agencies to conduct the environmental  
21 review, including four federal agencies and one state  
22 agency. Those agencies are the Bureau of Land  
23 Management, the U.S. Forest Service, the U.S. Army  
24 Corps of Engineers, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and  
25 the State of Utah's Public Lands Policy Coordinating

1 Office.

2           The Draft EIS contains more information  
3 about the decisions that the cooperating agencies would  
4 be responsible for making if the Board were to  
5 authorize the construction and operation of the  
6 proposed Uinta Basin Railway.

7           The Uinta Basin Railway is not being  
8 proposed, funded, or sponsored by the Federal  
9 Government. The project applicant is the Seven County  
10 Infrastructure Coalition, or the Coalition. The  
11 Coalition proposes to construct and operate an  
12 approximately 85-mile rail line extending from two  
13 terminus points in the Uinta Basin near South Myton  
14 Bench and Leland Bench to an existing Union Pacific  
15 Railroad Company rail line near Kyune, Utah.

16           The purpose of the proposed rail line would  
17 be to provide common carrier rail service connecting  
18 the Uinta Basin to the Interstate Common Carrier Rail  
19 Network using a route that would provide shippers with  
20 a viable alternative to trucking. The coalition  
21 anticipates that the proposed rail line would primarily  
22 be used to transport crude oil produced in the Uinta  
23 Basin to markets across the United States, but trains  
24 on the proposed rail line could also carry other  
25 product and commodities, potentially including frac

1 sand, other proppant material, steel, machinery, and  
2 mineral and agricultural products and commodities.

3           The volume of rail traffic on the proposed  
4 rail line would depend on future market conditions,  
5 including demand for crude oil produced in the Uinta  
6 Basin. Depending on those market conditions, the  
7 Coalition estimates that between approximately 3.68 and  
8 approximately 10.52 trains could operate on the  
9 proposed rail line each day on average, and that  
10 estimate includes both loaded and unloaded trains.

11           The National Environmental Policy Act, or  
12 NEPA, requires that federal agencies consider  
13 reasonable alternatives to a proposed action. In the  
14 case of the Uinta Basin Railway, there are relatively  
15 few potential routes for a rail line to take due to the  
16 mountainous terrain that surrounds the Uinta Basin.  
17 However, OEA identified three reasonable alternatives  
18 that would be logistically feasible and practical to  
19 construct and operate.

20           In the Draft EIS, these alternatives are  
21 referred to as the Action Alternatives. The Action  
22 Alternatives are the Indian Canyon Alternative, the  
23 Wells Draw Alternative, and the Whitmore Park  
24 Alternative. I will present maps of these three Action  
25 Alternatives in just a moment. In addition to the

1 Action Alternatives, though, the Draft EIS also  
2 considers the potential environmental impacts of the  
3 No-Action Alternative, which would occur if the  
4 Coalition did not construct and operate the proposed  
5 rail line.

6           This map shows the route of the Indian  
7 Canyon Alternative. From terminus points near South  
8 Myton Bench and Leland Bench, this alternative would  
9 extend westward and would then head southwest through  
10 Indian Canyon, paralleling Route 191.

11           There would be three tunnels on this route  
12 to maintain a safe grade while traversing the mountains  
13 that surround the Uinta Basin. South of Indian Canyon,  
14 the alternative would head west to a connection with an  
15 existing Union Pacific Railroad rail line near Kyune.  
16 The Indian Canyon Alternative would be approximately  
17 81 miles long, and it would cross land that is owned or  
18 managed by the Ute Indian Tribe, the U.S. Forest  
19 Service, the State of Utah, and the Bureau of Land  
20 Management, as well as private land.

21           The Wells Draw Alternative would also  
22 connect two terminus points in the Uinta Basin near  
23 South Myton Bench and Leland Bench to the existing  
24 Union Pacific rail line near Kyune. This alternative  
25 would follow a different route between those end points

1 compared to Indian Canyon Alternative, however. South  
2 of Myton, the route would follow Wells Draw toward its  
3 head waters and then would turn west into Argyle  
4 Canyon.

5           The Wells Draw Alternative would cross very  
6 rugged terrain and require 13 tunnels to maintain a  
7 safe grade. It would be approximately 103 miles long  
8 and would cross land managed by the Bureau of Land  
9 Management and the State of Utah, as well as private  
10 land.

11           Early in the EIS process, the Coalition  
12 developed a new alternative to avoid certain  
13 environmental impacts that had been identified. This  
14 is the Whitmore Park Alternative. It would be similar  
15 to the Indian Canyon Alternative because it would also  
16 parallel Route 191 through Indian Canyon. However, to  
17 the north and south of Indian Canyon, the Whitmore Park  
18 Alternative would follow a different route. To the  
19 north, the Whitmore Park Alternative would go around  
20 the Duchesne Mini Ranches area of Duchesne County to  
21 avoid impacts on residences there.

22           To the South of Indian Canyon, the Whitmore  
23 Park Alternative would be located further north  
24 compared to the Indian Canyon Alternative and the Wells  
25 Draw Alternative in order to avoid or minimize impacts

1 on greater sage-grouse in the Carbon Sage-Grouse  
2 Management Area.

3           The Whitmore Park Alternative would have  
4 five tunnels and would be approximately 88 miles long.  
5 In its request for Board authority to construct and  
6 operate the rail line, the Coalition identified the  
7 Whitmore Park Alternative as its preferred alternative.

8           I will turn now to a summary of the  
9 environmental review process. The first step in the  
10 EIS process is scoping. For this project, scoping  
11 began on June 19, 2019, when OEA issued a notice of  
12 intent to prepare an EIS. During scoping, OEA  
13 requested public and agency comments on the  
14 alternatives and the topics to be analyzed in the EIS.

15           OEA held six public meetings in the project  
16 area as part of scoping. After receiving comments on  
17 the scope of study for the EIS, OEA issued a final  
18 scope of study in December 2019. Following the end of  
19 scoping, OEA prepared the Draft EIS in consultation  
20 with the cooperating agencies. The Draft EIS analyzes  
21 the potential environmental impacts of the three Action  
22 Alternatives. It also sets forth OEA preliminary  
23 mitigation measures for addressing those impacts, and  
24 it identifies the Whitmore Park Alternative as OEA's  
25 preliminary environmentally preferred alternative. The

1 Draft EIS also sets the schedule for the public comment  
2 period and the online public meetings. The Draft EIS  
3 was published on October 30, 2020.

4           After the end of the public comment period  
5 for the Draft EIS, OEA will prepare a final EIS. The  
6 final EIS will respond to comments received during the  
7 comment period, and it will make OEA final  
8 recommendations to the Board, including the final  
9 recommended mitigation measures. The Board will then  
10 consider the entire record, including OEA's  
11 recommendations as it makes its final decision. In its  
12 final decision, the Board may decide to deny the  
13 Coalition's request for authority to construct and  
14 operate the proposed rail line. It may grant authority  
15 to construct and operate the proposed rail line, or it  
16 may grant authority with conditions, including  
17 environmental conditions. If the Board should decide to  
18 authorize the proposed rail line, the Coalition would  
19 then need to obtain rights of way or permits from one or  
20 more of the cooperating agencies. Those agencies would  
21 then need to decide whether to grant those rights of way  
22 or permits. The Draft EIS presents more detailed  
23 information about the decisions that the cooperating  
24 agencies could make depending on which, if any,  
25 alternative is authorized by the Board.



1                   Now, I will briefly review some of the  
2 major findings and conclusions of the Draft EIS.

3                   The Draft EIS analyzed the potential  
4 environmental impacts of the proposed rail line across  
5 a range of resource areas. These include vehicle  
6 safety and delay, rail operation safety, water  
7 resources, biological resources, geology, soils,  
8 seismic hazards and hazardous waste, noise and  
9 vibration, air quality and greenhouse gases, energy,  
10 cultural resources, paleontological resources, land use  
11 and recreation, visual resources, socioeconomics,  
12 environmental justice, and cumulative impacts.

13                   The Draft EIS concludes that any of the  
14 Action Alternatives would have significant  
15 environmental impacts. Any of the Action Alternatives  
16 would cross surface waters and wetlands, which would  
17 result in unavoidable impacts on water resources.

18 Among the Action Alternatives, the Wells Draw  
19 Alternative would permanently affect the largest area  
20 of surface waters and wetlands. While the Whitmore  
21 Park Alternative would permanently affect the smallest  
22 area.

23                   Any of the Action Alternatives would also  
24 affect vegetation and wildlife, including species that  
25 are listed as threatened or endangered under the

1 Endangered Species Act, as well as other species that  
2 are managed by federal, state, and tribal agencies.  
3 For example, any the Action Alternatives would cross  
4 habitat for greater sage-grouse, which is a species  
5 that is protected by the Bureau of Land Management and  
6 the State of Utah.

7           For this species, the Whitmore Park  
8 Alternative would minimize impacts by avoiding  
9 sage-grouse lek and summer brood-rearing habitats.

10           The proposed rail line would create noise  
11 that could disturb people who live near the proposed  
12 rail line. Wayside noise refers to the noise from  
13 locomotive engines, as well as from train wheels on  
14 rail. Depending on the number of trains that would  
15 move on the rail line each day, wayside noise could  
16 exceed the Surface Transportation Board's noise impact  
17 thresholds at up to six residences for the Indian  
18 Canyon Alternative, up to two residents for the  
19 Whitmore Park Alternative, and up to one residence for  
20 the Wells Draw Alternative.

21           The proposed rail line would have both  
22 positive and negative socioeconomic impacts.  
23 Beneficial impacts would include creating new jobs  
24 during construction and during rail operations, as well  
25 as generating tax revenue. Adverse socioeconomic

1 impacts would include the acquisition and displacement  
2 of residences and of economic activities, such as  
3 ranching or farming.

4           The proposed rail line would affect land  
5 uses on public, private, or tribal lands. The effects  
6 on land use would depend on the alternative. Any of  
7 the Action Alternatives would cross state land and  
8 private land. In addition, the Indian Canyon  
9 Alternative and the Whitmore Park Alternative would  
10 each cross inventoried roadless areas within Ashley  
11 National Forest and tribal trust lands within the Ute  
12 Indian Tribe's Uintah and Ouray Reservation.

13           The Indian Canyon Alternative and the Wells  
14 Draw Alternative would both cross Bureau of Land  
15 Management land. And the Wells Draw Alternative would  
16 cross parts of the Bureau of Land Management's Lears  
17 Canyon area of critical environmental concern, as well  
18 as areas with wilderness characteristics.

19           Among many other resource areas, the Draft  
20 EIS specifically analyzes areas that OEA learned are of  
21 concern to the Ute Indian Tribe, including impacts  
22 relating to vehicle safety and delay, rail operations  
23 safety, biological resources, air emissions, and  
24 cultural resources.

25           Based on OEA's analysis, and in

1 consultation with the cooperating agencies, OEA has  
2 preliminarily identified the Whitmore Park Alternative  
3 as the environmentally preferred alternative because  
4 that action alternative would avoid or minimize  
5 environmental impacts compared to the Indian Canyon  
6 Alternative and the Wells Draw Alternative. In  
7 particular, the Whitmore Park Alternative would avoid  
8 or minimize impacts on water resources, greater  
9 sage-grouse, and residential areas in the Duchesne Mini  
10 Ranches area and the Argyle Canyon area of Duchesne  
11 County.

12           For these reasons, OEA is preliminarily  
13 recommending that if the Board decides to authorize a  
14 proposed rail line, the Board should only authorize the  
15 Whitmore Park Alternative to minimize environmental  
16 impacts.

17           We welcome your comments on this  
18 preliminary recommendation, as well as any of the other  
19 conclusions presented in the Draft EIS.

20           If the Board should authorize the proposed  
21 rail line, OEA also recommends that the Board impose  
22 mitigation measures to mitigate impacts on the  
23 environment. The Coalition has proposed 56 voluntary  
24 mitigation measures, which are described in Chapter 4  
25 of the Draft EIS.

1           In addition to those 56 voluntary  
2 mitigation measures, OEA is also recommending an  
3 additional 73 preliminary mitigation measures. Those  
4 recommended mitigation measures are also set forth in  
5 Chapter 4 of the Draft EIS. We welcome your comments  
6 on these preliminary mitigation measures with the  
7 voluntary mitigation measures and the additional  
8 recommended mitigation measures.

9           After considering all public comments on  
10 the Draft EIS, OEA will make its final recommendations  
11 on mitigation to the Board in the final EIS.

12           Now, I will discuss how you can access the  
13 Draft EIS and find more information about the  
14 environmental review process.

15           This is a screenshot of the Board-sponsored  
16 project website for the EIS. You can find it at  
17 [www.uintabasinrailwayeis.com](http://www.uintabasinrailwayeis.com), or you can do a search  
18 for Uinta Basin Railway Environmental Impact Statement.  
19 On this website, the Draft EIS is available for  
20 download and you can also view an interactive map of  
21 the Action Alternatives on the website and review many  
22 project-related documents, including the field surveys  
23 that were conducted to support the environmental  
24 review.

25           You can also provide your comments on the

1 Draft EIS through this website. To do so, just click  
2 on the public involvement page, which provides a link  
3 to a comment form and instructions.

4           This is what the comment form looks like.  
5 You can type your comment right into the comment box,  
6 or you can upload your comment as one or more  
7 attachments. The comment box can be used for comments  
8 up to 4,000 characters long. If you would like to  
9 submit a comment that is longer than 4,000 characters,  
10 you can upload your comment in the form of a picture, a  
11 word document, a PDF file, or as another format.

12           Another place where you can find  
13 information about the proposed project is the Board's  
14 website at [stb.gov](http://stb.gov) or do a search for the Surface  
15 Transportation Board. The Board's website looks like  
16 this. To find information about the Uinta  
17 Basin Railway Project, you can click on the link that  
18 says, "Search STB Records." To do a search on the  
19 Board's website, you will need to know the docket  
20 number for the case. For the Uinta Basin Railway, the  
21 Docket Number is FD 36284 . If you conduct a search  
22 for Docket No. FD 36284, you will find filings and  
23 decisions about the case. These include the Draft EIS,  
24 which was issued on October 30th, as well as the  
25 Coalition's petition seeking authority to construct and

1 operate the proposed rail line.

2           The Draft EIS is currently available for  
3 public review and comment. The comment period is  
4 45 days long. It began on October 30th, 2020, and is  
5 scheduled to end on December 14th, 2020. To be  
6 considered in the final EIS, therefore, your written  
7 comments must be submitted or postmarked by  
8 December 14th. You can submit your oral comments at  
9 any of the six public meetings that we are holding  
10 during the comment period.

11           Due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, all  
12 of the public meetings are being held online. The  
13 dates and times of the online public meetings are shown  
14 on this slide, and information on how to register for a  
15 public meeting is available on the Board-sponsored  
16 public website at [uintabasinrailwayeis.com](http://uintabasinrailwayeis.com).

17           Before finishing today's presentation, I  
18 would like to briefly review the ways in which you can  
19 submit your comments on the Draft EIS. There are  
20 several different options for submitting comments and  
21 OEA will consider all comments equally, regardless of  
22 how you choose to submit them. You may give an oral  
23 comment at today's online public meeting or another  
24 online public meeting. You can find information about  
25 how to register for a meeting at the Board-sponsored

1 project website. Alternatively, you can submit a  
2 written comment electronically through the project  
3 website. There is also an option of mailing your  
4 comment if you prefer. You can send your written  
5 comments to me, Joshua Wayland, Surface Transportation  
6 Board, c/o ICF, 9300 Lee Highway, Fairfax, Virginia  
7 22031, Attention: Environmental Filing Docket No. FD  
8 36284. We ask that you please do refer to Docket No.  
9 FD 36284 in your mailed comments.

10 This brings us to the end of today's  
11 presentation. We really do appreciate your interest in  
12 and participation in the Surface Transportation Board's  
13 environmental review process for this proposed Uinta  
14 Basin Railway Project. We look forward to receiving  
15 your comments and continuing to consult with you  
16 throughout the remainder of the EIS process. Thank you  
17 all very much.

18 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thank you, Josh. We  
19 have now reached the second part of the online public  
20 meeting, a facilitated comment session. If you have  
21 not already registered to provide an oral comment and  
22 would like to speak, please send a chat message to the  
23 meeting host or raise your hand using the raise hand  
24 icon if you are on Zoom, or for call-in only users  
25 press star 9 to raise your hand and we will add you to



1 the commenter list.

2 We will call on you if time allows after  
3 those who have preregistered have made their comments.  
4 As a reminder, each commenter will have three minutes  
5 to make their comments. At the start of your comments  
6 please state your full name for the record.

7 Ladies and gentlemen, our first speaker is  
8 William Reese. William Reese.

9 Okay. I'm seeing a hand raised from one of  
10 our call-in users. I am going to ask call-in user  
11 ending in 4910 to unmute in case this is William Reese,  
12 our first preregistered speaker.

13 MR. FORDHAM: Hi, this is actually Darrell  
14 Fordham.

15 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Hi, Darrell.

16 MR. FORDHAM: Not William Reese.

17 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: No worries. I will add  
18 you to the speaker list.

19 MR. FORDHAM: Thanks.

20 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Okay. I see another  
21 user identified as "My PC." I am going to ask you to  
22 unmute in case this is William Reese. User identified  
23 as "My PC" you're unmuted. Is this William Reese?

24 Okay. And participant identified as "My  
25 PC," if you are -- you are unmuted, but if you're

1 speaking, we cannot hear you. Okay. Not seeing  
2 Mr. Reese on the line. Our next registered speaker is  
3 Karen Headland.

4 Ms. Headland, I'm going to ask you to  
5 unmute.

6 MS. HEADLAND: Thank you, Jennifer. Can  
7 you hear me?

8 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: I can. Please go ahead.  
9 You have three minutes.

10 MS. HEADLAND: Thank you. And I want to  
11 thank Mr. Wayland for an excellent presentation. I  
12 have two questions. And by way of background, I'm a  
13 former chief counsel and deputy administrator of the  
14 Federal Railroad Administration during the Obama  
15 administration.

16 My first question -- and I'll give you the  
17 both of the questions. The first question is: Why was  
18 FRA not a cooperating agency for the DEIS?

19 The second question is a little longer.  
20 And that is: It has been reported that the Uinta Basin  
21 Railway is negotiating to acquire -- acquire rights in  
22 the Union Pacific line currently unused between Dotsero  
23 and Pueblo. That line is actually shown on one of the  
24 maps in the DEIS.

25 Do you -- are you aware of what the status

1 of those negotiations are? And why was that route not  
2 considered when you looked at down rail impacts?

3 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Okay. Thank you for  
4 your comments. Ms. Headland, you have another two  
5 minutes. Would you like to expand on your comments at  
6 all?

7 MS. HEADLAND: No. Not at all. Thank you.

8 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Okay. Thank you for  
9 your comments.

10 Ladies and gentlemen, our next registered  
11 speaker, and I apologize if I mispronounce your name,  
12 is Malin Moench. I am going to ask you to unmute.

13 MR. MOENCH: Okay, can you hear me?

14 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: I can go ahead. You  
15 have three minutes.

16 MR. MOENCH: So that last name is a German  
17 name I don't even know how to pronounce, but it's Malin  
18 Moench in America.

19 I am a lawyer and an economist. And I am  
20 speaking for Utah Physicians for a Healthy Environment.

21 My main point is that the analysis of the  
22 No-Action Alternative in this draft EIS is woefully  
23 inadequate. This EIS confines itself to analyzing the  
24 environmental impact of building or not building the  
25 Uinta Basin Railway itself, while ignoring the expected

1 tripling or quadrupling of oil and gas production that  
2 its proponents say it will trigger. This is like doing  
3 risk analysis for the Titanic asking whether the dance  
4 band will play or not play while ignoring that the ship  
5 is steaming toward a looming iceberg.

6 In this case, the looming iceberg is the  
7 EPA's National Ambient air quality 8-hour standard for  
8 ozone. The Uinta Basin is already a nonattainment area  
9 for ozone, often reaching concentrations in winter that  
10 exceed peak 8-hour levels in the Los Angeles Basin.

11 The 2014 Uinta Basin winter ozone studies  
12 point out that these high concentrations of ozone form  
13 when VOCs and nitrous oxide are trapped in pools of  
14 cold air and are exposed to ultra violet light  
15 reflected off snow. These studies point out that the  
16 oil and gas operations are responsible for 99 percent  
17 of VOC emissions in the basin and nearly 60 percent of  
18 nitrous oxide emissions.

19 They say that the only way to bring the  
20 basin there into compliance with the clear act ozone  
21 standard is to cut down on the ozone precursors. Even  
22 though the basin is a ozone nonattainment area, the BLM  
23 has already approved leases that allow the basin two  
24 main oil and gas operators, Encana and Crescent Point,  
25 to double their fueling and production levels. This

1 railway is expected to result in another doubling of  
2 oil and gas production beyond those. The cumulative  
3 effect will be a quadrupling of production and  
4 logically of ozone precursor emissions. The Biden-led  
5 EPA can be expected to get back to enforcing the Clean  
6 Air Act after a four-year hiatus. It will require any  
7 oil and gas expansion projects to get nonattainment  
8 resource review permits under an EPA state  
9 implementation plan.

10 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thirty seconds  
11 remaining.

12 MR. MOENCH: NEPA requires of an EIS  
13 to analyze indirect and not just direct impacts of a  
14 project on a region's airshed. It also requires an EIS  
15 to analyze cumulative effect of a project, not just the  
16 isolated impact. And this EIS doesn't do either.

17 If it had analyzed the indirect and  
18 cumulative effect of the Uinta Basin Railway on the  
19 basin's ozone levels, it would show that it would make  
20 compliance for the 8-hour ozone standard impossible  
21 going forward. Its failure to undertake such an  
22 analysis makes it legally infirm. And that concludes  
23 my statement.

24 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thank you for your  
25 comments.

1                   Our next speaker this evening is Melissa  
2 Peck. Melissa Peck, I'm not seeing you on the Zoom  
3 meeting this evening. I do see a hand raised. Call-in  
4 user 3994 I am going to ask you to unmute to see if  
5 this is Mrs. Peck.

6                   MS. PECK: Hi, can you hear me?

7                   JENNIFER PIGGOTT: I can hear you. Is this  
8 Melissa Peck?

9                   MS. PECK: Yes.

10                  JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Great. You have three  
11 minutes.

12                  MS. PECK: Thank you. My name is Melissa  
13 Peck, and I am a member of the off grid-gated community  
14 in Argyle Canyon. We've been an off-grid gated  
15 community for over 50 years. It's a private area.  
16 None of us are wealthy people up there, but we do  
17 really love our peace and quiet and nature and  
18 everything. We have five game cameras, and we capture  
19 everything from bears, deer, elk, moose. We had a  
20 neighbor even capture a picture of wandering Buffalo,  
21 if you can believe that. But we've had forest grouse  
22 and sage-grouse. And that threatens them because  
23 because I know they -- they got rid of the -- the route  
24 that was going through Colorado because of their  
25 sage-grouse breeding grounds. Well, the Whitmore and

1 Emma Park area is the same -- the Craig South, and  
2 there is sage-grouse down there, too. So I don't know  
3 where the study got that from that they are going to be  
4 impacting less sage-grouse because that's not true.

5           So something else that I would like to  
6 point out is they are under estimating the cost of this  
7 project because they just added a second tunnel to the  
8 Whitmore line, I guess, if that's what you call it.  
9 And the cost is going to be enormous, not to mention  
10 the footprint. The footprint, I am really concerned  
11 about and is for a construction company and we do  
12 excavation and mining and things like that. And so we  
13 are very aware of what it takes to make a tunnel. And  
14 all the drilling, the blasting, the amount of soil and  
15 dirt to come out of the mountain.

16           It can be scary because you can run into  
17 pockets of gas. This is carbon country. And there  
18 is -- just a neighbor drilling his well ran into two  
19 pockets of gas. There is a lot of potential for danger  
20 and fire. We have -- a lot of our water in that area  
21 is very scarce already. And so we have a few springs  
22 and small creeks, and those will be affected.

23           The footprint for construction, they are  
24 going to want to take out our private gate that has  
25 been there for 50 years. It is grandfathered in. So

1 that's a legal concern of mine.

2 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thirty seconds  
3 remaining.

4 MS. PECK: Too, the footprint and all the  
5 construction is going to scar this area for years to  
6 come, for decades to come. Right now we have roads  
7 that are not two-lane roads, they are just dirt roads.  
8 The county does not give us any services whatsoever, no  
9 plowing, no grading, no garbage, no anything. And this  
10 is really going to devastate this population, and it's  
11 awful. I'm worried that the reason they got rid of the  
12 Craig route is because it was not a real legitimate  
13 route to begin with and they just really -- oh, and the  
14 last thing is the reason that the oil companies are not  
15 putting any money into this, is because this has been  
16 attempted with the highway and they run out of money.

17 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Time.

18 MS. PECK: And they don't want to be on the  
19 hook for it and so it goes nowhere.

20 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thank you for your  
21 comments.

22 Our next speaker this evening is Roger  
23 peck. Okay, Melissa Peck, I see your hand is raised.  
24 I am going to ask you to unmute.

25 MS. PECK: Can you hear me?



1 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Yes. You are unmuted.

2 MS. PECK: Okay. Roger Peck is my husband  
3 is Roger and is ill this evening and will not be  
4 participating.

5 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Okay. Thank you so  
6 much.

7 MS. PECK: Thank you.

8 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Okay our next speaker is  
9 Teri Durfee. I am going to ask you to unmute.

10 MS. DURFEE: Can you hear me?

11 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: I can. Go ahead. You  
12 have three minutes.

13 MS. DURFEE: Okay. Great. My name is Teri  
14 Durfee, and I oppose this being put through. I don't  
15 believe that public money should be spent on this  
16 railway at all. And I think there should be  
17 consideration on the EIS about the increased production  
18 of fossil fuels that will be created by having this  
19 railway in. And so it should be considered in the  
20 proposal because only focusing on the railway itself,  
21 it does not account for the impact that all of the  
22 increased exploration and drilling and all of the  
23 impacts of the fossil fuel on the environment.

24 Also, in the Uinta Basin, it's already very  
25 polluted. In the winter they have a lot of fog which

1 only keeps that in. And by allowing this railway, it  
2 would increase the air pollution, which is already  
3 beyond the federal standards. And it's already  
4 poisoning the Uinta Basin's air and water and harming  
5 the wildlife. So by adding the railway and increasing  
6 the production, it's only going to make things worse.

7           Also, the big game habitat. I'm worried  
8 about the animals that will be affected by this because  
9 having the railway go through will permanently change  
10 the landscape. And it would disturb the wildlife  
11 because each if you're just using the train, I mean,  
12 you have the noise, you have diesel smoke. And also  
13 there's a chance for derailments. And the biggest one  
14 of spills is of a huge concern, also a chance for  
15 wildfires. It's been extremely dry and the sparks that  
16 could be created from the train could definitely spark  
17 wildfires.

18           And so it is a huge threat to the community  
19 and the wildlife. And it's also damaging to the water,  
20 besides the impact of the actual railway on the water,  
21 there would also -- because of the increased production  
22 of the fossil fuels it would also --

23           JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thirty seconds  
24 remaining.

25           COURT REPORTER: Okay. It would also

1 threaten the Colorado River and the wildlife. And it  
2 is already -- the flows have already been reduced in  
3 the area because of the drought. And so it would only  
4 harm those areas even further. Thank you.

5 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thank you for your  
6 comments.

7 Our next speaker this evening is Reed Page.  
8 I am going to ask you to unmute.

9 MR. PAGE: And unmuted. Good to go  
10 Jennifer?

11 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Yes, I can hear you.  
12 You have three minutes.

13 MR. PAGE: Thank you so much. Hello, my  
14 name is Reed Joseph Page. I am an energy industry  
15 professional of the Uinta Basin. That is to say I grew  
16 up in the Uinta Basin and virtually all of my family  
17 and friends still live there. Although, I now live in  
18 the Wasatch Front. I am the director of marketing  
19 operations for Summit Energy, a regional natural gas  
20 marketing and trade company with commercial activity  
21 throughout the Uinta Basin, eastern Utah and the  
22 Rockies.

23 The sister companies include oil marketing  
24 and district water management and various other oil  
25 field activities.

1 I also offer professional services  
2 independently as an energy markets consultant providing  
3 market analysis and commentary.

4 Today my comments and opinions are my own,  
5 and do not represent the opinions of Summit Energy or  
6 its affiliates.

7 I would like to express my strong approval  
8 and support for the Uinta Basin Railway Project.

9 Access to the national rail system is the only path to  
10 allowing basin communities to finally participate in  
11 global markets and having any chance of diversifying  
12 the local economy away from primary dependents on  
13 extracted industries.

14 While I acknowledge that for at least the  
15 first decade of operation, the majority of the value  
16 moved by rail, will be derived from crude oil and  
17 related products. Admittedly, the total opposite of  
18 economic diversification. The presence of rail service  
19 will finally allow for other commercial opportunities  
20 in agriculture and manufacturing.

21 A global transition away from a  
22 fossil-based economy is inevitable. The timing of it  
23 is entirely up for debate. I am, in fact, supporting  
24 of the coming energy transition and recognize that the  
25 global decarbonization is a necessary and inevitable

1 step to human progress and even long term survival. I  
2 believe that this railroad will and can be viable  
3 subject still shipper commitments and will provide a  
4 healthy return for its investor during of the first  
5 20 years of operation and likely beyond. But during  
6 that time frame, the railroad operator has every  
7 incentive to diversify its customer base to include  
8 shippers is to encourage many other uses for an asset  
9 that will continue to serve the Uinta Basin long after  
10 our last barrel is produced.

11 A just transition will not be possible  
12 without the Uinta Basin Railway. Any stated wishes for  
13 a just a transition, or the basin, while denying the  
14 key necessary component for such a transition would be  
15 disingenuous. My support for the railroad is subject,  
16 however, to the conditions and operations are --

17 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: 30 seconds remaining.

18 MR. PAGE: Performed in a way that will  
19 minimize environmental and community impacts. I am not  
20 a biologist or ecologist and must defer to the  
21 judgement of those professionals involved in the  
22 approval of this project. I hope to see my home  
23 flourish and grow possibly to return one day for more  
24 than just a visit. Thank you.

25 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thank you for your

1 comments.

2 Our next speaker this evening is Donald  
3 Jex. I am going to ask you to unmute.

4 MR. JEX: Hi, Jennifer, can you hear me  
5 okay?

6 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: I can hear you just  
7 fine. You have three minutes.

8 MR. JEX: Great. I only -- I have a couple  
9 of concerns that I don't feel have been adequately  
10 addressed by the draft copy of the EIS. First of all,  
11 from an economic standpoint I appreciate the residents  
12 of the Uinta Basin in wanting to have this type of  
13 economic opportunity for their residents. However, the  
14 numbers that I've seen, and I'm a tax accountant and a  
15 rural agent for the internal revenue service. The  
16 numbers I've seen do not justify the cost that it's  
17 going to take to put in this rail line and maintain it  
18 after the fact. So that's my first objection to this  
19 rail line even being considered at this time.

20 The second concern I have basically are the  
21 statements, many of the statements made in the  
22 environmental impact statement that the opinions of  
23 those who have drafted this environmental impact  
24 statement are for the most part not residents of the  
25 area. They don't have to deal with the long term

1 effects of this rail line. They don't have to worry  
2 about the tax implications for property and other  
3 taxes. They are going to affect the residents of this  
4 county and this area should the production of oil not  
5 raise the level that they're anticipating.

6 Thirdly, the impact on the ground water  
7 and -- by the way, my wife and I are property owners in  
8 upper Argyle Canyon. Our property is located about a  
9 mile below where the rail line would be run on the  
10 Whitmore route. The ground water up there is going to  
11 be substantially affected by the drilling of the tunnel  
12 through that part of the canyon. Because not only the  
13 winter runoff but the spring rains and so on feed  
14 Argyle Creek, which goes all the way down to 9-Mile  
15 Highway. And if that moisture stream is interrupted,  
16 that's going to have a disastrous affect of the ecology  
17 of the canyon.

18 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thirty seconds  
19 remaining.

20 MR. JEX: Thank you. Lastly, my last  
21 concern with the effects of the Church Camp Fire set  
22 six or seven or eight years ago. We are still  
23 recovering from the effects of that fire. Introducing  
24 a spark-generating rail line in the top part of that  
25 canyon is going to be disastrous. And there is no way

1 that anybody can guarantee that fires will not be an  
2 issue with the route that the rail line is taking  
3 through the foliage in that canyon.

4 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Time.

5 MR. JEX: Thank you very much. I  
6 appreciate the time to speak.

7 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thank you for your  
8 comments.

9 Our next speaker is James Robinson.

10 MR. ROBINSON: Yes, hello. This is James.  
11 Can you hear me?

12 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: I can hear you. You  
13 have three minutes.

14 MR. ROBINSON: Thank you. I don't think  
15 I'll need that much time. I'd like to echo the  
16 comments of Reed Page. I agree as a resident of the  
17 Uinta Basin currently involved in an industry not  
18 related to fossil fuel exploration. I see a benefit  
19 for having rail services in the basin to increase our  
20 economic diversity in the long run.

21 I do understand that in the short term  
22 fossil fuel growth will increase as that is one of the  
23 major driving factors for getting the railway started  
24 out here in the basin. But I look forward to the  
25 opportunity to grow different industries in the basin



1 in the long run to a period of time when we move away  
2 from our dependance on fossil fuel exploration as the  
3 primary economic driver in the basin.

4 As the saying, I've heard out here several  
5 times, we live and die by the price of crude in the  
6 basin. So I look forward to seeing that be less true.  
7 Not that I don't support all industry in some regards,  
8 but I -- I would also like to remind everybody that the  
9 amount of heavy truck traffic that is currently moving  
10 through the basin also contributes to particulate  
11 emissions. And the engines on diesel trains are highly  
12 efficient and very clean as compared to most  
13 freight-moving trucks.

14 That's all I have to say. Thank you very  
15 much.

16 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thank you for your  
17 comments.

18 Our next commenter is Carl Robinson. Carl  
19 Robinson, I'm not seeing you on the Zoom webinar. If  
20 you're a call-in user, please press star 9 to raise  
21 your hand so I can identify you. Carl Robinson? Not  
22 seeing any hands raised.

23 Our next registered commenter is John Doe.  
24 John Doe, if you're on the phone -- if you're on the  
25 webinar please raise your hand. Or if you are a

1 call-in user, please press star 9 to raise your hand.  
2 John Doe?

3 Not seeing any hands. Our next registered  
4 speaker is Kerry Farrer, which I believe is on the  
5 Zoom. I am going to ask you to unmute.

6 MR. FARRER: Can you hear me?

7 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: I can. Go ahead you  
8 have three minutes.

9 My name is Kerry Farrer. I am an  
10 owner/operator K&B Contracting. I'm a resident here in  
11 the basin. I also own a nonprofit that helps run the  
12 Utah athletics programs here in the basin. And I am  
13 head -- one of the head moderators of the American  
14 Nine, there is a group. They are about 4,000 members.  
15 A majority of them live local here in the greater basin  
16 area.

17 I am in agreeance [sic] with the railroad.  
18 For one, I believe that the EIS -- that the members of  
19 the EIS are professionals. I think they know what  
20 they're doing. And I believe that this is something  
21 that we need. It's no secret that the basin has been  
22 stagnant since before Covid-19. Industry-wise, we need  
23 some sustainability and not just the oil field, but a  
24 window to get other industries in here to get growth.

25 For example, if I can get a car skipped on

1 rail from Maine to Salt Lake for \$500 but I have to pay  
2 a truck to haul it from Salt Lake City to Roosevelt for  
3 \$1500. And when it comes to stuff like that, this  
4 railway is going to open up the window for a lot of  
5 small businesses.

6           You're going to get rid of the big  
7 corporate thumb that's on the neck of everybody out  
8 here, running, you know, keeping us -- you know, all  
9 our prices at a certain -- and the complication that we  
10 can't compete with them.

11           I believe that this rail is a safer means  
12 of transportation. I've grown up here most of my life.  
13 If I grow up part of my life in Alaska, and so I know  
14 about pipelines. And so I know the hazards of  
15 pipelines and how they go in. And you read about those  
16 breaking. And they're -- very, very seldom hear  
17 anything about a car -- a railcar derailling and  
18 spilling oil everywhere. And when a pipeline breaks,  
19 it empties the pipeline on the ground. I think this  
20 will be one of the best alternatives that we can have.  
21 I agree with -- the truck traffic is part of that.  
22 From living here, you can see when the air quality goes  
23 bad out here it's usually when the wind blows in from  
24 Salt Lake City.

25           The opportunities that it's going to bring

1 for growth, we need them. And I would ask that, you  
2 know, the people in charge don't let people that don't  
3 live here dictate how we need to grow or need to live.  
4 I don't believe that someone that has a vacation home  
5 should be able to come out here and say, "Hey, you  
6 guys, you can't do this," you know? We got people that  
7 have been suffering, struggling. We have companies  
8 that can't even -- that spent millions of dollars to  
9 help the environment to help local businesses.

10 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thirty seconds  
11 remaining.

12 MR. FARRER: And all that goes away when  
13 the work goes down. This gives us the opportunity for  
14 growth, not just in the oil industry, but in other  
15 industries. And I think that this is something that we  
16 need, and I am a big advocate for this. I hope that  
17 this comes through. And I hope that, you know, we can  
18 find the safest route. We can find -- but work in  
19 agreeance [sic] with most people that -- you know, not  
20 disturb other people. And hopefully it's something  
21 that we can make up. That's all I got. So --

22 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thank you for your  
23 comments. Our next registered speaker is Pamela  
24 Underwood. I do see a Pamela on the line. I am going  
25 to ask Pamela to unmute to see if this is Pamela

1 Underwood.

2                   Pamela I've asked you to unmute. Pamela,  
3 are you able to unmute? Okay. Pamela, if this is  
4 Pamela Underwood, it doesn't appear that you're able to  
5 unmute. If you would just raise your hand if you would  
6 like to still make a comment or send me a chat message  
7 or perhaps call back in into the toll-free line, the  
8 877-853-5247, Meeting ID 874-8149-6515. Password,  
9 0649357.

10                   Okay. Our next registered speaker is Jean  
11 Mold. I'm going to ask you to unmute.

12                   MS. MOLD: Hello.

13                   JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Hi, I can hear you. You  
14 have three minutes.

15                   MS. MOLD: Okay. Thank you. I am resident  
16 of the Uinta Basin and a landowner there in Argyle  
17 area. And so I have pros and cons for both.

18                   You know, I'm a strong believer in economic  
19 development in the Uinta Basin because I understand the  
20 economy here needs help. I understand that we need  
21 long-term solutions. I understand all of that because  
22 I live here. And I've work closely with the oil and  
23 gas industry over the years, and so I understand those  
24 dynamics. But as a property owner in Argyle, I have a  
25 lot of concerns about the routes being proposed. So I

1 am not opposed to the railway per se, but I am opposed  
2 to the routes. Because, you know, I hear comments that  
3 they are just weekend cabin places or they are  
4 wilderness area or they are unusable land. But coming  
5 through Indian Canyon and up into Argyle is a beautiful  
6 ride and a drive and that will be all disturbed and  
7 that will all change. And then as you come up into the  
8 Argyle area, it is a heavily-wooded area with a lot of  
9 springs and ponds and water wells. And I am very  
10 concerned about how the water will be affected. I'm  
11 very concerned about the fire potential because it is a  
12 heavily-wooded area. And I've not seen any plans or  
13 comments on the mitigation of fire prevention. And  
14 because it is so heavily wooded, that when fires have  
15 started in the past, they do a lot of damage in a short  
16 amount of time. So I am very concerned about that with  
17 the railway.

18 I'm concerned about the air quality, the  
19 noise pollution. I mean, that's what we are going to  
20 hear when we are in that area. Everyone has invested a  
21 lot of time and energy in building the spots that they  
22 can take their family. And I think that has been even  
23 more relevant during these Covid times to see how  
24 important those places are to our families. And the  
25 privacy -- I am concerned that the privacy will be lost

1 with the railway coming in. The tunnel impact is huge.  
2 Because we all know that that kind of construction will  
3 disrupt more likely than not the water, the wildlife,  
4 the movement of everything up there. I've tried to get  
5 detailed maps on exactly where the proposed routes come  
6 through, which landowners are affected and what areas  
7 and what waters are affected.

8           Everything is pretty vague. I have not  
9 been able to get real concrete, pinpoint answers. And  
10 I know those things are still being worked on, but  
11 those are my concerns. I understand the long term. We  
12 need to do long term economic development for the Uinta  
13 Basin. I agree with that.

14           JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thirty seconds  
15 remaining.

16           MS. MOLD: I do -- I am unclear. You know,  
17 we keep saying if we can have the railway in the Uinta  
18 Basin it will open up our economy and solve our  
19 problems, but I sometimes wonder. Because Price, Utah  
20 has a railway goes right through it and their economy  
21 struggles, too. And so what will be the difference  
22 that the railway will provide for us if the oil and gas  
23 industry is slowed down with that incoming, you know,  
24 government administration?

25           So, those are my concerns. Again, I'm

1 proeconomic development. I just am not in support of  
2 these route proposals.

3 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thank you for your  
4 comments.

5 Our next speaker this evening is Darrell  
6 Fordham.

7 MR. FORDHAM: Hi, thank you. My name is  
8 Darrell Fordham. I've participated in each of the five  
9 prior online public comment meetings. I've listened to  
10 many who are in support of this project and listened to  
11 many more who are opposed to it. Those who are in  
12 favor of it have touted economic growth and a  
13 Field-of-Dreams mentality, that somehow if we build it  
14 all of the Uinta Basin's economic woes will be a thing  
15 of the past.

16 I also note that no one who has spoken in  
17 favor of the project stands to lose anything. It is  
18 easy to support a project that doesn't directly  
19 negatively affect you or impact your own property, way  
20 of life, happiness or quiet enjoyment. So many who  
21 have spoken in favor of the project have stated that  
22 they are life-long Uinta Basin residents. What I find  
23 curious is that these same individuals, while touting  
24 alleged economic growth and falsely claiming that all  
25 sorts of diverse industries will move into the area if



1 the railway is built, at the same time deride,  
2 disparage and belittle anyone who does not live in the  
3 basin, even going so far as to say that anyone who is  
4 not a full-time Uinta Basin resident doesn't deserve to  
5 have a say in this project and should "get lost."

6           How are you going to attract new businesses  
7 and the required influx of population with such an  
8 attitude of people you label as outsiders? How many of  
9 you who support this project have actually read the  
10 draft EIS? Did you skip over Chapter 6? Or are you  
11 just simply choosing to ignore it completely?

12           Chapter 6 identifies the short-term and the  
13 long-term affects of this project, most of which are  
14 identified as being irreversible. Some of these  
15 include permanent lands, productivity losses for public  
16 recreation, wildlife habitat, agriculture and grazing,  
17 including permanent loss of irrigated crop lands and  
18 severance of private land parcels. Permanent reduction  
19 of water resources due to water use during construction  
20 and permanent operations, permanent loss of wetland  
21 functions and values, permanent alteration of surface  
22 water flow and flood plains needed to convey flood  
23 waters due to as many as 506 the stream crossings and  
24 as many as 59 stream realignments.

25           Short- and long-term impacts on vegetation,

1 fish and wildlife resources, habitat loss, alteration  
2 and fragmentation for wildlife resulting in an  
3 increased mortality, barriers to wildlife movement,  
4 impacts on fish populations and decreases in breeding  
5 success.

6           Permanent loss of existing habitat to a  
7 number of animal and plant species, including many  
8 federal endangered species, irretrievable commitment of  
9 materials to build the track structure, irretrievable  
10 commitment of ground water and surface water resources,  
11 irreversible changes to wetlands, irreversible removal  
12 and alteration of vegetation and wildlife habitat.

13           JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thirty seconds.

14           MR. FORDHAM: Increased accessibility to  
15 wind and water erosion and irreversible loss of soil  
16 product activity, irreversible use of nonrenewable  
17 fossil fuels, irreversible loss of cultural resources  
18 to include archeological sites, tribal resources and  
19 build resources, irreversible loss of scientifically  
20 important fossils and paleontological resources,  
21 permanent and irreversible negative changes to the  
22 permanent landscape, permanent and irreversible  
23 negative changes to the visual quality of the  
24 surrounding rural landscape.

25           JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Time.

1 MR. FORDHAM: I have more, but I'll  
2 suspend.

3 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thank you for your  
4 comments.

5 Okay. Ladies and gentlemen if Reese --  
6 William Reese, Carl Robinson, John Doe or Pamela  
7 Underwood have joined the meeting or are a call-in  
8 user, please raise your hand, send me a chat message or  
9 press star 9 to identify yourself.

10 "My PC," I see your hand is raised. I am  
11 going to ask you to unmute to see if you are one of  
12 those four speakers. And "My PC," I've asked you to  
13 unmute. "My PC," it shows that you're still muted. If  
14 you're able to unmute on your end, I've asked you to  
15 unmute.

16 Okay. Mr. Fordham, I also see that your  
17 name is raised. I will add you back to the speaker  
18 list as time permits.

19 Okay. Our next speaker is AJ Kendall. I  
20 am going to ask you to unmute.

21 MR. KENDALL: Can you hear me?

22 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: I can hear you. You  
23 have three minutes.

24 MR. KENDALL: Okay. I don't know if I have  
25 three minutes worth of stuff to say.

1 I just got on this meeting tonight just to  
2 listen, but I'm surprised to hear that so many people  
3 are against the railway. Just from what I've seen of  
4 this area over the years that it's very boom-and-bust  
5 with oil, and I think it's kind of silly that a  
6 railroad hasn't been constructed. I think it could  
7 have been used 40 years ago. I think it would have  
8 been the best thing for this area, and it would have  
9 helped it grow and there would be different industries  
10 here. And people wouldn't struggle so much when oil's  
11 down because things would have been able to happen that  
12 have not happened.

13 I think that it would be foolish for us to  
14 not try to get this railroad here. I think it would  
15 open up a ton of communities. Shipping would be a lot  
16 cheaper. People could start manufacturing stuff here  
17 in the basin and ship it out at a competitive price. I  
18 think the semitrucks are -- on the highways, those are  
19 dangerous, a lot of pollution. And I think the  
20 railroad would have paid for itself and would have been  
21 a great thing to do years ago.

22 I think some people might be kind of afraid  
23 of change or have fear of the unknown and they worry  
24 that a railroad might be noisy or cause fires or  
25 something, but I'm pretty sure -- I feel like they're

1 not that dangerous. I think it would only help the  
2 Uinta Basin a lot, but -- let's see.

3 Yeah. I think that's about all I have to  
4 say.

5 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Okay. Thank you for  
6 your comments.

7 Okay our next speaker is Cambria Redmond.  
8 I am going to ask you to unmute.

9 MS. REDMOND: Hello, can you hear me?

10 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: We can hear you. Go  
11 ahead you have three minutes.

12 So, my name is Cambria Redmond and I am a  
13 senior undergraduate studying at Metropolitan State,  
14 Denver. So, I'm currently in Colorado, but I'm a Utah  
15 native. I am studying integrative healthcare and  
16 biology. So I propose No-Action. Woefully inadequate  
17 is all too correct of a statement. There is no  
18 assurance that there will be a movement towards  
19 decarbonization for use with this rail line as well as  
20 this is a privately funded project. So public use is  
21 not assured or intended.

22 So diversification of markets is minimal.  
23 I think that if there was any possible way of  
24 construction, assurance that movement towards  
25 decarbonization and a movement towards more sustainable

1 markets, energy production, such as wind turbines or  
2 solar energy, could provide even more jobs than  
3 traditional coal or gas and minimize ecological  
4 impacts.

5           There really is no reason that we should be  
6 continually investing in a market that will not sustain  
7 our generations from here on out. That's really it.  
8 All of the ecological impacts have been mentioned by  
9 others. And there is no possible way that a private  
10 company should have the say on people's private or  
11 public national lands. That's really it.

12           For the well-being of our children, if we  
13 wish to have any in the next coming generations. And  
14 the lands of the Uinta Basin just because there is so  
15 much natural gas does not mean that we should be using  
16 it. There is better ways. Thank you so much.

17           JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thank you for your  
18 comments.

19           Okay, our next speaker is Julie Jex. I am  
20 going to ask you to unmute.

21           MS. JEX: Thank you. Can you hear me?

22           JENNIFER PIGGOTT: I can hear you. You  
23 have three minutes.

24           MS. JEX: Great. I would like to go on  
25 record as opposing the current three lines that are

1 suggested, especially the Whitmore and the Indian  
2 Canyon and the Wells Draw. It's been my observation as  
3 a long-term resident of Utah. And I must say I grew up  
4 in southern Utah where water is scarce. And we -- I  
5 lived in an area where they thought that they -- if  
6 they brought in a pig farm, it was going to solve  
7 everybody's problems, but there were many, many  
8 unintended consequences from that. And the pig farm  
9 isn't doing quite as well as they thought it was going  
10 to do.

11           So I need to state that, first of all, the  
12 county commission would have to subcontract the railway  
13 to a private company to maintain and run, et cetera.  
14 That would cost tax payer dollars.

15           The seven counties involved are rural  
16 counties, and cannot afford to do that if the economy,  
17 as we are seeing, is taking a downturn. If the good  
18 folks of Duchesne and the Uinta Basin want to bring in  
19 new industry, if they're thinking about manufacturing,  
20 that's going to add to the pollution. It's also -- I  
21 don't know what other industry that they're talking  
22 about other than agricultural or the -- the wind  
23 production.

24           I need to go also on record as stating that  
25 we do not oppose the railway. We just don't like it

1 going through any part of Argyle Canyon.

2 Private property in Utah is at ten percent  
3 the last report I saw. Everything else is owned by  
4 state and federal governments. And so, this is a very  
5 high commodity to have any type of private property.  
6 And so those of us who have scrimped and saved to have  
7 a little piece in Argyle Canyon feel very passionate  
8 about this. We paid just as many taxes for the library  
9 and the schools in Duchesne as the good folks in  
10 Duchesne County, but we get no services for those  
11 taxes.

12 I have to also agree with Mr. Moench, I  
13 guess, that the EIS study is very inadequate. You're  
14 willing to --

15 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thirty seconds.

16 MS. JEX: -- go around the Mini Ranches but  
17 not any other private property. If production is down  
18 in the basin, truck travel is going to go down,  
19 therefore pollution will go down.

20 All of this EIS is on speculation. And I  
21 have to say that we cannot afford economically for this  
22 project to go through. So I would say please deny this  
23 project. Thank you.

24 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thank you for your  
25 comments.



1           Okay our next speaker is under the name "My  
2 PC." I'm going to try to unmute you again and see if  
3 we can have success. "My PC," I'm going to ask you to  
4 unmute. Okay, "My PC," I've asked you to unmute. And  
5 it doesn't appear to be -- it didn't appear that you're  
6 able to unmute. If you would please, call in, at  
7 877-853-5247, Meeting ID 874-8149-6515, Password:  
8 05649357.

9           Okay. I see another hand raised with  
10 call-in user ending in 0920. I am going to ask you to  
11 unmute.

12           MR. EVANS: Hi, my name is Steve Evans. I  
13 have owned and operated radio stations in the Uinta  
14 Basin for over 25 years. I have also served on many  
15 community service organizations, including president of  
16 the Vernal Area Chamber of Commerce.

17           These experiences have provided me the  
18 opportunity to consult with numerous local retail  
19 businesses owners about the economic challenges that  
20 they face. The Uinta Basin is the most -- one of the  
21 most challenged -- is the most challenging place to do  
22 business in the State of Utah. This is due to the  
23 cyclical nature of the extraction industry, which is  
24 the primary source of local jobs here. Although we  
25 have huge amounts of energy resources under our feet,

1 producers are limited due to the inability to transport  
2 product to market. Additionally, they are limited to  
3 selling the product to just the North Salt Lake  
4 refineries to monopolize prizes by placing big  
5 discounts of Uinta Basin goods. Proposed railways will  
6 not influence the market price of oil. However, it  
7 will put crude exported from the Uinta Basin in a  
8 competitive market environment and help stabilize the  
9 industry. The Uinta railway would allow producers the  
10 ability to transport to a national and international  
11 markets, thereby allowing the free capital system to  
12 work by creating a competitive bid for energy produced  
13 in the Uinta Basin.

14           It should be noted here that Utah's  
15 population is expected to double by the year 2050.  
16 Communities along the Wasatch Front, Salt Lake City,  
17 Ogden and Provo are already struggling with  
18 unprecedented growth this past decade. There simply is  
19 not enough room along the Wasatch Front to meet the  
20 projected demand. The Uinta Basin however, has an able  
21 workforce with room to grow.

22           The Uinta Basin would provide a means to  
23 expand and diversify our local economy by creating jobs  
24 and through mineral lease monies and other taxes, a  
25 means to build a local infrastructure to meet the

1 forecasted state growth. With the ability to transport  
2 goods and services via rail, our economic development  
3 offices would then be able to market this growth toward  
4 the Uinta Basin where we would have the workforce,  
5 transportation and affordable land.

6           With the stable economy comes more stable  
7 families. With this last phase of energy layoff,  
8 hundreds of families from throughout the Uinta Basin  
9 have been separated from the family's primary  
10 bread-winner and have been forced to leave home to work  
11 a 10-on and 10-off shift in another energy producing  
12 state. Local crime statistics conclude, when there is  
13 a down turn in the local economy --

14           JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thirty seconds.

15           MR. EVANS: -- crimes involving substance  
16 abuse, domestic violence, juvenile truancy increases.  
17 Uinta railway, in my opinion, will help mitigate those  
18 social problems by creating economic diversity and the  
19 development of local jobs. Thank you for your  
20 consideration. Those are my comments.

21           JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thank you for your  
22 comments.

23           Okay, user "My PC," I see your hand is  
24 raised. I am going to try to unmute you again. My PC  
25 you're unmuted. Can you hear me? User identified as

1 "my PC," you are unmuted.

2 Okay. I see we have a hand raised caller  
3 with 3994. I am going to ask you to unmute.

4 MS. PECK: Hi. Can you hear me?

5 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Yes. You're kind of  
6 soft. If you can get a little closer to your phone.

7 MS. PECK: I am sorry, I'm driving. My  
8 husband is Roger peck. And he's ill but he wants to  
9 make a few points.

10 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Go ahead. You have  
11 three minutes, and can you please state your name for  
12 the record.

13 MS. PECK: Melissa Peck for Roger Peck.

14 He wanted to bring up is that the SCIC is  
15 pushing so hard right now to get this finalized before  
16 the end of the year because President Trump is still in  
17 office. If a new president is elected that is not  
18 President Trump, then (inaudible) will be drastically  
19 reduced and that makes this project a very unwise and  
20 unsafe investment.

21 None of the oil companies are investing in  
22 this project because they don't want to be on the hook  
23 for the billions of dollars it is going to take to  
24 finish this railroad.

25 Another concern because of that is that the

1 railroad will never be finished and all of the  
2 environmental impacts will go ahead and be permanently  
3 done and yet the railroad will still not be finished.

4 He also wants everyone to know that we are  
5 a member of the Argyle Wilderness Preservation  
6 Alliance, and we have a petition of about 3,800, as of  
7 today, of signatures in opposition to this railroad,  
8 against it, because it is not a good economic or  
9 environmental project.

10 We do feel for the people -- everyone in  
11 the basin. We have family in the basin and everything,  
12 but there has to be something else besides crude oil  
13 and fracking and tar sand and all of that. In order to  
14 make a community, you have to come up with several  
15 different resources for income. And this is a  
16 possibility. And they need to go back to the table and  
17 come up with different ideas because these fossil fuels  
18 may be something of the past.

19 Anything else?

20 Any way, one of the reasons that they  
21 didn't do the -- that they didn't do the Craig Colorado  
22 route, yes they said it was because of sage grouse, but  
23 the Whitmore and the Emma Park area down there also has  
24 sage grouse, and it is a nesting ground down there. So  
25 whoever did that research botched that.

1           The reason that they do that is because the  
2 (inaudible) board, the transportation board was going  
3 to lean toward that one because the people in Colorado  
4 wanted it. And because it was supposed to be a dummy  
5 route. They have always wanted Argyle Canyon route.  
6 And now, a Whitmore is -- they want to attach to the  
7 rail line on Highway 6, because they don't just want to  
8 send the oil out of state, they want to send it to the  
9 Gulf Coast. They want to send it out of the country.

10           So, why is it a good idea economically or  
11 environmentally that the U.S. is purchasing oil from  
12 other countries?

13           JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thirty seconds.

14           MS. PECK: We can produce our own, even  
15 though there is not a lot. So we have the means to  
16 produce our own. Why on earth are we sending it out of  
17 the country. That makes no sense, whatsoever.

18           So I think that's all he wanted to get  
19 across, and I appreciate the time given. Thank you.  
20 We vote no on this project.

21           JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thank you for your  
22 comments.

23           Pamela Underwood, I see that you're still  
24 on the Zoom. I am going to try and have you unmute  
25 again since you registered to provide comments. Okay,

1 and Pamela I am going to ask you to unmute.

2 MS. UNDERWOOD: Can you hear me?

3 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Yes, I can hear you.

4 You have three minutes.

5 MS. UNDERWOOD: Hi, my name is Pamela  
6 Underwood, and I'm a landowner in Argyle. This  
7 property has been in my family for over 40 years. I  
8 have -- I also come from a family who has worked in the  
9 oil field for over 30 years.

10 I support drilling and keeping the country  
11 oil-independent, but not at a cost of destroying the  
12 environment, people's health, communities, the  
13 destruction of private-owned land and the possibility  
14 my grandchildren will not have the opportunity to enjoy  
15 this land.

16 I've heard the comments about people who  
17 support this. What they so easily forget is just a few  
18 years ago during the last boom, rent went from \$500 a  
19 month to \$2,000 a month in the basin. They forgot how  
20 after the boom was over, people lost their homes and  
21 their way of life. I ensure you, this will happen  
22 again, as Melissa Peck said. As soon as we get a  
23 democratic president, it will happen.

24 I live in Price, and I heard people say,  
25 "Oh, the railway is going to bring more industry here."

1 That railway has not brought any new industry to Carbon  
2 County in decades. We rely on coal. That is the only  
3 thing we use that railway for.

4 I would like to see the Whitmore route  
5 removed from consideration because it was the  
6 last-minute route added to the paperwork that was  
7 submitted to the STB. We did not get an opportunity to  
8 comment on that route during public comments.

9 Now, that.

10 Drexel and Hamilton has agreed to finance  
11 the railway, they should return the \$28 million to the  
12 CIB so they can put the Colorado route back on the  
13 table since it does make the most logical and  
14 economical sense.

15 The last thing I oppose, the petition for  
16 exemption and the request for a refund for filing fees.  
17 The SCIC has not been transparent about this railway  
18 and have shown how deceitful they are and therefore  
19 they should be required to meet or exceed all  
20 requirements. In fact, since they are requesting to  
21 destroy forest, endanger wildlife, contaminate water  
22 and destroy people's property all in the name of oil,  
23 they should be held to a higher standard.

24 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thirty seconds.

25 MS. UNDERWOOD: Thank you, I'm done.



1 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thank you for your  
2 comments. Unmute, call-in user ending in 4663.

3 MR. STANGEL: Hi. My name is Mike Stangel  
4 I am the host of the (inaudible) with Newstalk KVEL.  
5 We've been broadcasting this show, this event, live on  
6 KVEL local in the Uinta Basin, and I want to just add a  
7 few comments.

8 We had Mike McKee that joined us in the  
9 studio prior to this event and was broadcast. We got  
10 some great feedback about and also we had (inaudible)  
11 Rio Grande was on there as well, a representative for  
12 Rio Grande. We had some great updates about it. And I  
13 encourage those who are listening to voice their  
14 opinions and also share their comments as well.

15 I wanted to add a few things to this. One  
16 of the things that came up was the money, the funds,  
17 that were used for the CIB board. During our  
18 conversation today, Mike McKee, announced that the  
19 monies that were -- the grant money that they had  
20 received upon the commercialization that that money  
21 will be returned back to the CIB. And that the  
22 commitment that they have made, and it is a contract  
23 commitment. So, that's a substantial return of the CIB  
24 money back, so that that money can be used for further  
25 projects through the CIB board at their discretion.

1 I just wanted to voice my public opinion  
2 and support of this. I think the project is going to  
3 be great. I think that it is an opportunity for the  
4 basin residents as a whole to experience an opportunity  
5 of growth, not only within the oil extraction business  
6 but also diversification of other businesses and  
7 energy.

8 I will also add that the Uinta Basin  
9 doesn't have a rail. There's other places that do, the  
10 larger cities, Salt Lake City. There is also some  
11 rural areas that have rail. My question to those that  
12 are opposing it is: Why are those areas more important  
13 than the families that live here in the basin? Because  
14 these families need jobs. They need to be able to  
15 provide for their family, save for their retirement and  
16 be able to take care of the next generation as well.

17 So, I think when we look at this as a whole  
18 as a big picture we need to consider everybody not just  
19 what we want but what is good for everybody as a whole  
20 as a population. And that's the end of my comments,  
21 thank you.

22 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: "My PC" I am going to  
23 try and assist you in unmuting one more time. "My PC,"  
24 I am going to ask you to unmute. "My PC," you are  
25 unmuted within Zoom, so you just need to unmute on your

1 end and we should be able to hear you.

2           Zoom user by the name "My PC." You are  
3 unmuted within Zoom. You just need to unmute on your  
4 end and hopefully we'll be able to hear you for your  
5 comments. Again, you can call in using the dial-in  
6 number to provide our oral comments, and I will look  
7 for your number with your hand raised if you are able  
8 to call in.

9           Ladies and gentlemen we heard from  
10 everybody who requested to speak and have time left.  
11 For those of you using the Zoom webinar, please raise  
12 your hand bu using the raise hand icon if you've not  
13 already provided an oral comment and would like to  
14 provide an oral comment. For the call-in own users  
15 please press star 9 if you like to provide an oral  
16 comment.

17           Seeing none, is there anyone who has  
18 already spoken who would like to elaborate on their  
19 previous comments? Zoom user Krayden Haslem. I am  
20 going to ask you to unmute.

21           MR. HASLEM: Hi. This is Krayden Haslem.  
22 I would just like to provide a comment real quick.

23           JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Go ahead. You have  
24 three minutes.

25           MR. HASLEM: Yeah, I just wanted to provide

1 a little different perspective. I was a pilot that  
2 flew this area quite a bit as a pipeline controller for  
3 compressed natural gas, both towards Craig and towards  
4 Price. The area that is going to be impacted by the  
5 Craig route that all the people in Argyle Canyon are  
6 proposing is a way bigger area, and it's beautiful.  
7 Both areas are beautiful. I get that. I get that they  
8 are upset that their cabin places are getting  
9 encroached on. I get that. I get how that's  
10 upsetting. I get how the sage grouse are important. I  
11 also get that this community needs some extra things.

12 If oil and gas is truly going away, this  
13 rail line won't be used for moving oil and gas. It  
14 will be used for whatever is new. And I'm excited to  
15 see that growth. Thank you.

16 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thank you for your  
17 comment. Okay. Call-in user ending in 9726, I see  
18 your hand is raised. I am going to ask you to unmute.  
19 Call-in user ending in 9726.

20 Can you hear me?

21 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: I can hear you. You  
22 have three minutes.

23 MR. ALLEN: Thank you. My name is Reid  
24 Allen. And I'd like to enforce everything that Darrell  
25 has said.

1           This -- it is a pretty canyon, and it's  
2 going to screw up the water, which we all depend on up  
3 in there, the springs, the fire hazard.

4           You put -- I personally put a trailer up  
5 there. And when the fire comes, they won't even let me  
6 go in and take that out. It's just a bad deal.

7 There's a lot of other ways they could take that  
8 railroad. They could take it even off of the Soldier  
9 Summit and go down. It's just not feasible in our area  
10 or even when they follow even the 191 Highway all the  
11 way just off the side of it.

12           I just don't see it, and it will ruin the  
13 wildlife up there. There's even antelope up there,  
14 moose, elk, you know, grouse, deer, even beaver up in  
15 there, you know? I just -- please don't let them put  
16 it through our canyon. That's all I have to say.

17 Thank you.

18           JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thank you for your  
19 comments. Okay.

20           Darrell Fordham I see your hand is raised.  
21 I am going to ask you to unmute.

22           MR. FORDHAM: Hi, thank you. I appreciate  
23 the opportunity to just finish my comments. I just  
24 like to make one clarification in regards to  
25 Mr. Stangel's comments.

1           The money is only going to go back to the  
2 CIB, that \$27.9 million, if construction actually  
3 commences on this railway.

4           I've read the contract that he references,  
5 and there are no guarantees that that money will ever  
6 be repaid, especially if this railway doesn't get  
7 built. They flat out gambled the public's money on  
8 this because Drexel Hamilton and all the private  
9 companies were unwilling to put their own money up to  
10 plan this project.

11           And then to reference my previous comments,  
12 listing all of the permanent and irreversible impacts  
13 that will accompany this project, essentially what the  
14 Seven County Coalition and what the Uinta Basin  
15 residents are saying, is that all of these impacts  
16 don't matter. The profits and enrichment of private  
17 oil companies and wealthy oil executives are more  
18 important than these permanent and irreversible  
19 impacts. Making rich oil companies richer is more  
20 important than the lives, properties, farms, ranches  
21 and quiet enjoyment of everyone who is in the path of  
22 the railway. Our concerns and our rights don't matter.  
23 I for one call BS on such notions.

24           Profitability of private companies should  
25 not come at the massive expense of private individuals,

1 the environment, wildlife, endangered plants, et  
2 cetera.

3           And then, referencing the trucking in the  
4 Uinta Basin and the associated pollution, how do you  
5 guys think that the oil is going to get to the train?  
6 It's not going to levitate there. It's going to be  
7 trucked to the trains. And if oil production increases  
8 four times what it is now, that means four times the  
9 amount of trucks on the roads and the highways in the  
10 basin. The only trucks that are going to come off the  
11 roads from this project being built are the few that go  
12 from Duchesne to Wellington to the current transloading  
13 facility down there.

14           I'm also -- you know, if you spent a  
15 billion-and-a-half dollars on economic growth of other  
16 types, what would the Uinta Basin look like? It  
17 certainly wouldn't -- would have much more diversity  
18 than this billion-and-a-half dollars is going to  
19 create.

20           As far as other businesses coming in, I'm a  
21 business owner myself. I truck a dozen semi loads of  
22 products in for my business every year. It doesn't  
23 come by rail because it's not cheaper to ship it by  
24 rail, which is the reason that the rail hasn't made  
25 price boom with other industries --

1 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thirty seconds.

2 MR. FORDHAM: -- and it is not going to do  
3 it for the Uinta Basin either.

4 You guys are being sold a bill of goods on  
5 the backs of -- of public monies to benefit private oil  
6 companies. It's only going to create bigger booms,  
7 sure, and also much, much, bigger busts. You really  
8 need to think about this and look at the complete  
9 picture of this project. Thank you.

10 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thank you for your  
11 comments. Kerry Farrer. I see your hand is raised. I  
12 am going to ask you to unmute.

13 MR. FARRER: Hello. This is Terry Farrer  
14 again. I would like to elaborate on this as far as the  
15 truck traffic goes.

16 You know, where these proposed rails are, a  
17 lot of the oil fields are already out there. So as far  
18 as the truck pollution the people might be worried  
19 about, a lot of that truck pollution stays off the main  
20 roads. In the last couple of years, we have numerous  
21 trucks wreck spilling oil all across the basin. And  
22 why anybody wouldn't want a safer means of  
23 transportation to get the oil out of here, for one.

24 Nobody feels that environmental risks or  
25 what they have going on is any less important than the



1 next. It's -- the difficult part for me to understand  
2 is how a few can say that they would want this when  
3 this could affect many as far as industry. And there's  
4 been several industries unlike Carbon County with their  
5 rail that have wanted to come in here that have refused  
6 to come in here because we didn't have a rail, which  
7 is, you know, one of the main things of why people want  
8 it -- or would want the rail to get their industry in  
9 here is because it is cheaper to haul stuff in and out.  
10 And let's talk about the big corporations that we have.

11           Nufill [phonetic], before they sold to  
12 McCann [phonetic], spent hundreds of thousands of  
13 dollars a year in helping environmental problems  
14 getting rid of environmental problems and helping local  
15 issues, donated millions of dollars in the time that  
16 they have been here to do that. And they left -- they  
17 sold out and left with a big corporate company because  
18 it just wasn't feasible for them to stay here.

19           And when it comes to stuff like that, if  
20 people can't open their eyes and see that that -- that  
21 this could be good for up and coming companies that are  
22 willing to do the same, then maybe they need to relook  
23 at what we have going on and how we've been sitting  
24 stagnant for -- long, long before Covid. That's all I  
25 got. So, thanks.

1 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thank you for your  
2 comments.

3 Okay, ladies and gentlemen, we've received  
4 a comment through the chat that I've been asked to read  
5 aloud. The comment reads as follows:

6 My name is Amy Hemphill, A-m-y  
7 H-e-m-p-h-i-l-l, as a resident of the Uinta Basin,  
8 member of a ranching family and an oil and gas industry  
9 employee, I would like to support the railway as we  
10 need diversification to soften the blow of our current  
11 boom-and-bust cycle. I believe that the expansion of  
12 drilling will benefit the entire state in the form of  
13 tax revenue. I believe the amount of pollution due to  
14 truck traffic will be reduced as a distance required to  
15 transport crude to market by truck will be reduced.

16 I would like to echo the support given in  
17 the comments by Steve Evans. End comment.

18 Okay. Malin Moench, I see your hand is  
19 raised. I am going to ask you to unmute.

20 MR. MOENCH: Okay, did that succeed?

21 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Yes, you are unmuted.  
22 Go ahead. You have three minutes .

23 MR. MOENCH: I thought the point about what  
24 would you get if you did an alternative investment of a  
25 billion-and-a-half dollars was a very interesting

1 point.

2 I have an economics degree, and one of the  
3 things that I have learned studying that subject is  
4 that the employment impact of low carbon energy swamps  
5 the employment impact of carbon-based energy. It's --  
6 the international monetary funded study of energy costs  
7 in the United States. And their study concluded that  
8 if you spend a million dollars buying energy in a year,  
9 you could support 1.9 permanent jobs. If you spent  
10 that same million dollars on wind-powered energy, you  
11 would support 5 jobs annually. If you spent that  
12 million dollars on solar, you would support 7 permanent  
13 jobs.

14 So, if you were to spend that \$1.5 billion  
15 on massive solar farms, which the Uinta Basin is  
16 excellently suited for, could you have triple or more  
17 the employment impact on the people in the basin. And  
18 it wouldn't be adding to their pollution problems. It  
19 wouldn't be ruining the health of the people who live  
20 there. And it would have had higher pay and more  
21 stable jobs. It wouldn't be this boom-and-bust cycle  
22 of what has been plaguing the Uinta Basin's economy for  
23 the last 40 years.

24 That's all I want to say.

25 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thank you for your

1 comments.

2 Ladies and gentlemen, we still have a  
3 little time remaining if you would like to make an oral  
4 comment. To do so, please sent the host a chat  
5 message, raise your hand by using the raise hand icon,  
6 or for call in user press star nine to raise your hand.  
7 While we won't be presenting any additional information  
8 or new content we will stay on the line until the  
9 published end time to receive your oral comments.

10 Call-in user ending in 7081, I see your  
11 hand is raised. I am going to ask you to unmute.

12 MR. MCKEE: Did I make it?

13 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Yes, we can hear you.  
14 Please state your name for the record. You have three  
15 minutes.

16 MR. MCKEE: My name is Jeff McKee, and I'm  
17 out of Vernal over here. I am 100 percent in favor of  
18 this railway. I feel for those landowners that have  
19 issues and I think they really need to be looked at.  
20 If we have some land and had the issues with, and it  
21 would be the similar thing and I think there are some  
22 great points. If there is another route that works,  
23 and it's doable, great.

24 But so far, living here in the basin, I am  
25 very frustrated with these busts. I'm tired of us not

1 having other economical ways to succeed. And if this  
2 is available, the other options I haven't heard are  
3 available -- the one guys said if you dumped another  
4 billion dollars into the basin, you know, what would  
5 that do? I'm all up for that idea too, but to my  
6 knowledge there haven't been any other billion dollar  
7 offers to come in.

8           So real quick, I have -- I do a little bit  
9 in the agricultural world. That is most of my life. I  
10 think this will help me. I think it will help others.  
11 And I'm ready for it. I would like to see us not  
12 struggling every time there is a bust. And I think  
13 it's just a good option for us. I am in favor of it  
14 and 100 percent supportive of it. And that's all I  
15 got.

16           JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thank you for your  
17 comments. Okay, Don Jex or this might be Julie Jex. I  
18 see your hand is raised. I am going to ask you to  
19 unmute.

20           MR. JEX: I just wanted to make one final  
21 comment concerning the responsibility of the government  
22 entities that are involved. I don't know how many of  
23 you have been following the election results, but I  
24 think we're in a real catch-22 here with the  
25 possibility of an administration coming into power that

1 has expressly intended to shut down the carbon drilling  
2 and fracking industry. And I'm concerned about how  
3 this will impact the overall effect of this industry in  
4 the Uinta Basin.

5 We need to make sure that before we're  
6 dealing with all of these what-ifs, I think that is a  
7 major what-if that we need to talk about. And I think,  
8 you know, as long as we're dealing with what-ifs,  
9 that's one that needs to be taken into account.

10 I realize there is not an environmental  
11 impact, but it is certainly going to be an impact  
12 somewhere. That's all I have. Thank you.

13 JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thank you for your  
14 comments.

15 Ladies and gentlemen, we have a little time  
16 remaining. Would anyone else like to make an oral  
17 comment this evening? Again to make an oral comment,  
18 you can send the host a chat message, raise your hand  
19 using the raise hand icon, or for call-in users press  
20 star 9 to raise your hand.

21 Don Jex, I see your hand is raised again.  
22 I am going to ask you to unmute.

23 MS. JEX: Hi, this is Julie Jex again. I  
24 have so many conflicting and confusing ideas here  
25 because I hear these comments about how everything is

1 going to help the basin. Well, where's the  
2 responsibility of the government leaders in the basin  
3 for not investigating or proposing additional resources  
4 or alternative ideas rather than focusing on this  
5 railway, which they proposed was going to run all of  
6 this oil out of the basin. Well, part of the problem  
7 is they couldn't get a pipeline because the oil is so  
8 low grade and not that many people wanted it is my  
9 understanding.

10           And then, my second confusing idea is I  
11 don't think that the people in the basin realize that  
12 we are not opposed to a railway going out of the basin.  
13 We are just opposed to it going through private  
14 property that we have put a lot of investment, time,  
15 energy, money into, just as they have with their farms  
16 and ranches, which we -- which we agree with. And we  
17 contribute to the economy of the basin.

18           And so, we just don't want it to go through  
19 any piece of Argyle Canyon. It's -- it's such a  
20 commodity now. And I don't know if these folks realize  
21 it, because they're on multiple acres, but it is very,  
22 very scarce now. And at some point, the Uinta Basin if  
23 they think that it's going to be a bedroom community of  
24 Wasatch Front, it may or may not. But number one,  
25 there's a lot of infrastructure that needs to be

1 improved. We have family in North Dakota that have  
2 seen booms and busts, and they build schools and now  
3 the schools are empty.

4           There's just too many what-ifs with no  
5 types of guarantees. It's going to take ten years to  
6 pay for this railroad as stated in earlier comments.  
7 Do we have ten years? What if it doesn't get finished?  
8 Then the tax payers of the Seven County Commission will  
9 be on the hook. So I don't think that people are  
10 really following this through. We just don't have any  
11 type of guarantee.

12           And so I think that the government  
13 officials in Duchesne and Vernal and surrounding areas  
14 need to take a good hard look at their responsibility  
15 in all of this. If they want to build a railroad,  
16 fine. Just don't do it on my tax dollars and don't  
17 take it through Argyle Canyon. Thank you.

18           JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thank you for your  
19 comments.

20           Darrell Fordham, I see your hand is raised.  
21 I am going to ask you to unmute.

22           MR. FORDHAM: Just one final comment. I  
23 echo what Julie just said. You know, we're not opposed  
24 to economic growth in the basin, and we're not opposed  
25 to a railway. Our biggest frustration is that we were



1 never involved in the process of the study of these  
2 routes and of possible alternatives. All three of  
3 these routes now go through our canyon and through our  
4 community. And they've been literally just shoved down  
5 our throats. And, you know, if the Seven County  
6 Coalition had been open and honest and upfront from the  
7 beginning and if they had brought potentially affected  
8 landowners into the process and gave us a seat at the  
9 table instead of doing all of this planning and having  
10 all their meetings behind closed doors where the public  
11 wasn't permitted to participate, you know, we would  
12 have a different out look on this. But the fact is  
13 that they've done everything they could to shut us out  
14 of the process, to limit our voices. And, you know, at  
15 this point, we feel like we have no other alternative  
16 but to oppose this railway entirely because our voices  
17 haven't been heard. Our concerns haven't been  
18 addressed, and they're just shoving this down our  
19 throat through the middle of our community. And that's  
20 where our frustration and our heartburn comes.

21           It's not that we don't feel for the people  
22 in the basin and your economy and your families and,  
23 you know, we -- we don't have any benefit to -- to the  
24 basin's economy not growing and prospering and  
25 succeeding. You know, we support a significant portion

1 of those communities with our tax dollars that we pay  
2 out there, again, for no services. So, you know,  
3 this -- this process could have been handled totally  
4 differently. But frankly, the Seven County Coalition  
5 has hid and lied and misled the public to garner  
6 support and they just haven't been truthful about this  
7 project from the very beginning.

8           You know, I've been to 30-plus meetings  
9 regarding this project. I've spent hundreds and  
10 hundreds of hours researching this project, going to  
11 all the Seven County Coalition meetings, listening to  
12 them, going to all the STB meetings.

13           You know, our concerns are being ignored.  
14 Nobody is working with us to find a resolution to find  
15 another route around our community. And that's the  
16 problem that we have with this railroad. Thank you.

17           JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thank you for your  
18 comments.

19           Jean Mold, I see your hand is raised. I am  
20 going to ask you to unmute.

21           MS. MOLD: I would just like to echo  
22 Darrell's last comments and that, you know, in the  
23 Uinta Basin, you know, people are wondering why we are  
24 so passionate about Argyle. And this would be similar,  
25 and it's not the same. But it would be similar to

1 trying to propose a railway up through Diamond  
2 Mountains where it has been in families for generation  
3 and generations and properties are worth millions of  
4 dollars, but more importantly they are important part  
5 of properties to the landowners and to the families.  
6 And, you know, it's important.

7           So I -- my point is the same as Darrell's  
8 last comments is that what if we could find a better  
9 route, a route that wouldn't affect over 300  
10 landowners, you know? And I know that some are -- not  
11 all are affected directly, but all are affected up in  
12 that area. That's a lot of property owners affected by  
13 some -- by this decision.

14           So, again, I am very proeconomic  
15 development for the Uinta Basin. I am not opposed to  
16 the railway; I am opposed to these routes. Thank you.

17           JENNIFER PIGGOTT: Thank you for your  
18 comments. Ladies and gentlemen, would anyone else like  
19 to make an oral comment this evening?

20           Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for  
21 participating in this online public meeting. All  
22 comments whether submitted orally, electronically  
23 through the project website or in writing through the  
24 U.S. Mail, will receive equal consideration in  
25 preparing the final EIS.

1                   Please submit your comments via the  
2 Board-sponsored project website at  
3 [www.uintabasinrailwayeis.com](http://www.uintabasinrailwayeis.com) or you can mail your  
4 comments to Josh Wayland Surface Transportation Board,  
5 c/o ICF, 9300 Lee Highway, Fairfax, Virginia, 22031,  
6 Attention: Environmental filing, Docket No. FD 36284.

7                   To be considered in the final EIS, all  
8 substantive comments should be received or postmarked  
9 by the close of the comment period on December 14,  
10 2020.

11                   Remember that the draft EIS is available on  
12 the Board-sponsored project website at  
13 [www.uintabasinrailwayeis.com](http://www.uintabasinrailwayeis.com) and at libraries in the  
14 project area. Thank you for your participation this  
15 evening. This meeting is adjourned.

16                   (Concluded at 8:08 p.m.)

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