



# KOOTENAI COUNTY

## BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

W. TODD TONDEE • DANIEL H. GREEN • JAI K. NELSON

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June 16, 2014

The Honorable Mike Crapo  
United States Senate  
239 Dirksen – Senate Office Bldg.  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Raul Labrador  
United States House of Representatives  
1523 Longworth – House Office Bldg.  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable James E. Risch  
United States Senate  
483 Russell – Senate Office Bldg.  
Washington, DC 20510

Gentlemen:

We are writing to share our concern about proposals to dramatically increase rail traffic in the northern region of the state. Historically, the railroads have served an integral role in our North Idaho communities, and they continue to serve as part of our regional identity. Pending proposals, however, to export coal and increase rail transport of oil could dramatically increase rail traffic through these communities. We are concerned about the magnitude of potential coal and oil train traffic and what this could mean for our families and businesses.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is the permitting authority for three coal-export terminal projects: the Gateway Pacific Terminal at Cherry Point, Washington, the Coyote Island Terminal at the Port of Morrow, Oregon, and the Millennium Bulk Logistics Terminal in Longview, Washington. The primary rail line to feed coal to the terminals passes through Bonner County.

Collectively, the announced capacity of all of these projects is approximately 105 million tons of coal per year. A recent report by the Western Organization of Resource Councils estimated this amount of coal could result in up to 60 coal trains per day traveling through the 78-mile “funnel” between Sandpoint and Spokane Washington. In addition, this line may also see another 22 oil trains carrying highly volatile crude oil from North Dakota, if proposed Northwest oil facilities are also approved.

Our communities deserve an opportunity to understand the potential impacts of this increased traffic. Among our concerns are:

- Safety issues raised by the increased traffic congestion at crossings and the delay of emergency vehicles.
- Potential increased tax burden on local communities needing to improve crossings and prepare for potential spills, derailments and other emergencies. (Currently, railroads contribute only 5% of the cost when an at-grade crossing is replaced by an underpass or overpass.)
- Potential problems caused by fugitive coal dust and/or diesel particulates that may contribute to public health impacts, derailments, and pollution of Idaho waters by coal falling from railcars.

Idaho does not have a voice in the review of these rail proposals. For two of the three terminal proposals, the Corps is producing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act. However, to date, the Corps insists they will consider the impacts only at the export terminal sites and not the impacts to railroad communities along the route. We are concerned the Corps may authorize the export terminals without considering how this traffic will affect our communities.

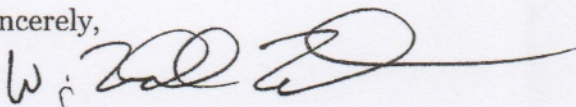
We urge you to:

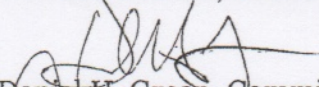
1. Request that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers conduct a comprehensive and programmatic EIS of the coal export facility proposals under their review, including examination of the impacts to communities all along the rail lines;
2. Urge the Surface Transportation Board to exercise its jurisdiction to examine conflicts with other rail users and ensure that the cost of mitigating impacts of the unprecedented coal traffic does not fall on the local communities, other rail users and taxpayers;
3. Support the recommendations from the National Transportation Safety Board to the Federal Railroad Administration (issued January 23, 2014), which would improve safety of oil transport by rail.

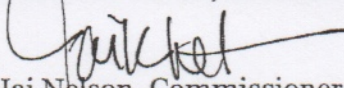
Idaho families, communities and businesses are relying on you to look out for our health and welfare on this critical issue. Idaho currently has no voice in this process. We have nothing to gain and everything to lose if these proposals are approved without proper review.

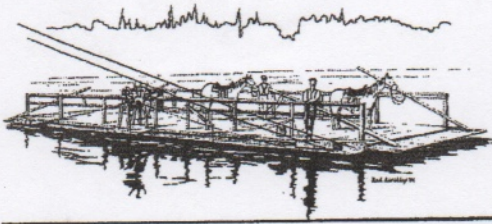
Thank you for your attention to our concerns.

Sincerely,

  
W. Todd Tondee, Chairman

  
Daniel H. Green, Commissioner

  
Jai Nelson, Commissioner



## CITY OF BONNERS FERRY

7232 Main Street  
P.O. Box 149  
Bonners Ferry, Idaho 83805  
Phone: 208-267-3105 Fax: 208-267-4375

June 17, 2014

COPY

Honorable Mike Crapo  
United States Senate  
239 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable James E. Risch  
United States Senate  
483 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Raul Labrador  
United States House of Representatives  
1523 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Gentlemen:

The City of Bonners Ferry wishes to impart to you our concerns about safety and other issues in regard to increased rail traffic for the transport of coal and oil. Many of the towns in northern Idaho were born with the railroads, and we have embraced railroads as an integral part of our regional identity. Pending proposals, however, to export coal and increase rail transport of oil could significantly increase rail traffic through our communities. We are concerned about the magnitude of potential coal and oil train traffic and what this could mean for our families and businesses.

In light of the Lac-Mégantic, Quebec disaster of last year we have serious reservations about the current rail traffic let alone the potential for a three-fold increase in oil unit trains. Two major east/west rail carriers pass directly through our town and, to make matters worse, one of them passes within 300 feet of our fire, emergency services, and dispatch. We could not only see a major fire but might find ourselves with no ability to contain it or to notify those who should be first responders.

Idaho is the only state involved in this commerce with equal liability and no economic benefit. With the increasing number of coal and oil trains combined with our population centers and miles of fragile ecosystems it's not a matter of if but when. We want Idaho to be fully engaged in the process of safety and health concern reviews and any and all potential changes.

I would urge you to:

1. request that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers conduct a comprehensive, cumulative programmatic EIS of the coal export facility proposals under their review, which examines the impacts to communities all along the rail lines;
2. have the Surface Transportation Board exercise its jurisdiction to examine conflicts with other rail users and ensure that the cost of mitigating impacts of unprecedented coal and oil traffic does not fall on the local communities, other rail users, and taxpayers;

*Mailed 6-18-14  
KL*

3. support strict new federal standards on new tankers that haul crude oil and other hazardous materials and require that existing tankers be brought up to those standards or retired; and
4. support the recommendations of the National Transportation Safety Board to the Federal Railroad Administration issued January 23, 2014, which would improve the safety of oil transport by rail.

Idaho families, communities, and businesses are relying on you to look out for our health and welfare on this national issue. Idaho currently has no voice in this process. We have nothing to gain and everything to lose if these proposals are approved without proper review.

Thank you for your attention to our concerns.

Sincerely,



David K. Anderson  
Mayor



CITY OF EAST HOPE  
505 WELLINGTON PLACE/PO BOX 186 HOPE, IDAHO 83836  
(208)264-5877 PHONE/FAX [easthope.city@gmail.com](mailto:easthope.city@gmail.com)

July 8, 2014

U.S. Sen. Mike Crapo  
239 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

U.S. Sen. James E. Risch  
483 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

U.S. Rep. Raul Labrador  
1523 Longworth HOB  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senators Crapo and Risch, and Rep. Labrador,

The U.S. Army corps of Engineers is presently studying a proposal to permit construction of three coal export terminal projects which could increase rail transport traffic through our community.

We urge you to request the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers expand the Scope of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to include an analysis on both the merits and the cumulative environmental impacts of increased rail traffic through East Hope and other communities along the shipping route.

A full and through analysis will allow communities and public officials to evaluate the full costs and benefits of this proposal. In East Hope, the primary impact may very well be noise and related effects of increased use. Our most valuable asset is our quality of life. East Hope is a prime recreational destination bordering along Pend Oreille Lake and a desirable place to live.

By law, trains have to sound their horns to alert/warn of their presence at crossings. And with the potential increase in train traffic will come increased noise levels. Solutions to minimize noise and other related impacts in surrounding residential areas should be addressed in the EIS.

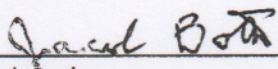
In summary we urge the Idaho Congressional Delegation to request the Corps of Engineers expand its scope of study in the three coal-export terminal projects EIS to include the total cumulative impacts and


benefits to the transportation system from the Powder River Basin mines to the proposed port terminals. While State and Local Governments have no jurisdiction over trains and the rail system, it is important that potential impacts from noise and effects of increased traffic be addressed in the EIS.


Thank you for your attention to our concerns.

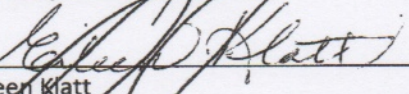
Very Respectfully,

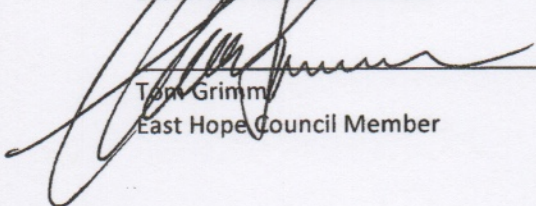
Signed,

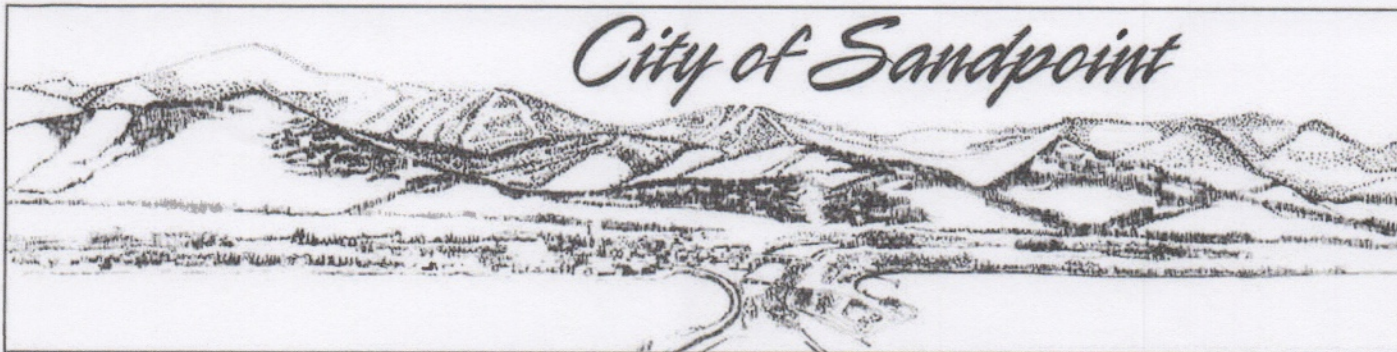
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jacob Both  
Mayor, City of East Hope  
505 Wellington Place  
East Hope, Idaho 83836

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jerry Clemons  
East Hope Council President

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Vernon Fleisher  
East Hope Council Member

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Eileen Klatt  
East Hope Council Member

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Tom Grimm  
East Hope Council Member



September 18, 2014

Daniel R. Elliott, Chairman  
Surface Transportation Board  
395 E Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20423

Subject: Request to include the City of Sandpoint in the review of the proposed Tongue River Railroad

Chairman Elliott and Members of the Surface Transportation Board,

It has come to our attention that the rail lines that traverse the City of Sandpoint could experience a substantial increase in train traffic from exporting coal from the Powder River Basin to proposed West Coast ports. We understand that the construction of the Tongue River Railroad would contribute significantly to this additional traffic, as it would connect the proposed Otter Creek coal mine to the existing rail lines.

Since these additional coal trains would impact the residents and visitors of Sandpoint by degrading air and water quality, increasing the frequency of traffic delays at crossings, delaying emergency response services, and threatening our local economy, we hereby request that the Surface Transportation Board (STB) consider the City of Sandpoint in your Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Tongue River Railroad and consult with us as the review process moves forward.

We have specific concerns related to increased rail traffic and believe that it is the responsibility of the STB – as the regulatory agency for the rail system – to step in and ensure that communities are not forced to bear the costs of expensive infrastructure upgrades to mitigate impacts (e.g. overpasses, underpasses, quiet zones). The City of Sandpoint lacks adequate funding for these projects, and we strongly believe these costs must be divided fairly between the railroad and taxpayers.

Please consider, and formally include, the City of Sandpoint as you move forward in the review process for the Tongue River Railroad.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carrie Logan".

Carrie Logan  
Mayor

c: Deb Miller, STB Vice Chair  
Ann D. Begeman, Board Member  
Victoria Rutson, Director, STB Office of Environmental Analysis  
U.S. Senators Mike Crapo and Jim Risch

No: 14-48  
Date: September 17, 2014

RESOLUTION  
OF THE CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF SANDPOINT

**TITLE: A REQUEST TO THE SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD THAT IT INCLUDE THE CITY OF SANDPOINT IN THE TONGUE RIVER RAILROAD ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS AND REQUIRE THE RAILROAD(S) TO SHARE THE COSTS OF NECESSARY INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS**

WHEREAS: The City of Sandpoint, with a population of approximately 7,500, funnels all rail traffic from Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF), Union Pacific and Montana Rail Link (MRL) railroads;

WHEREAS: The route through the City of Sandpoint represents the easiest way to transport coal from Southeast Montana to the West Coast;

WHEREAS: Arch Coal's proposed Otter Creek Mine in Southeast Montana, the largest proposed new coal strip mine in the contiguous United States, is designed to supply coal to West Coast coal export terminals;

WHEREAS: The proposed Tongue River Railroad (TRR), which is jointly owned by Arch Coal, BNSF, and Forrest Mars, Jr., would be the conduit for transporting coal from Otter Creek to the existing MRL/BNSF line;

WHEREAS: Building the Otter Creek Mine and Tongue River Railroad would therefore lead to increased coal train traffic through the City of Sandpoint, contributing to more frequent traffic delays and increased emergency response times at the at-grade crossings, higher levels of air and noise pollution and degradation of water quality from lost coal and coal dust;

WHEREAS: These impacts will affect the health, public safety, and quality of life of our residents and require infrastructure upgrades to mitigate impacts, such as overpasses, underpasses, and quiet zones;

WHEREAS: The City of Sandpoint lacks the funding to pay for necessary infrastructure projects and will be required to seek public funding for private benefit;

WHEREAS: The Surface Transportation Board (STB) is the sole agency responsible for regulating railroads and has committed to consider the TRR's impacts to down-line communities and the entire rail system in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Tongue River Railroad; and

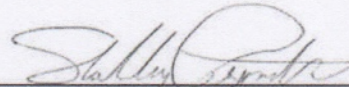


WHEREAS: The STB has the established authority to require railroad companies to help mitigate the cost of infrastructure improvements necessitated by new rail construction.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT: The City of Sandpoint believes that building the Tongue River Railroad would affect the health and well-being of Sandpoint residents and require expensive infrastructure projects for which the City lacks adequate funding.

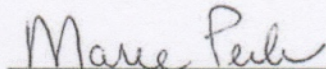
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT: The City of Sandpoint formally requests that the Surface Transportation Board consult with the Mayor of Sandpoint to properly assess coal train traffic impacts during the Tongue River Railroad EIS process.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT: The City of Sandpoint requests the Surface Transportation Board utilize the Tongue River Railroad proceeding to ensure that the costs of increased train traffic are shared fairly by railroad companies and not borne principally by community taxpayers.



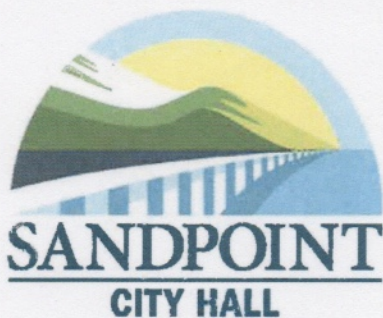
Shelby Rognstad, City Council President  
on behalf of Mayor Carrie Logan

ATTEST:

  
Maree Peck, City Clerk

City Council Members:

		YES	NO	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
1.	Eddy	X			
2.	Rognstad	X			
3.	Aitken				X
4.	Williamson	Second	X		
5.	Camp		X		
6.	Fragoso	Motion	X		



Panel Members,

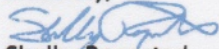
My name is Shelby Rognstad, I am the mayor of Sandpoint, Idaho. Today I also represent the Mayors of neighboring Dover, Ponderay and Kootenai. Our towns lie within the Pend Oreille watershed and also lie along the corridor through which this increased coal traffic is proposed to travel. There are many reasons we are collectively opposed to the proposed Long View Terminal. The significant increase in coal shipments has negative impacts on health, water quality, air quality and on global climate stability. Many here today will speak to these concerns.

However, I want to highlight another, public safety. Our rural communities lack qualified personnel and adequate mitigation resources needed to respond to a transportation emergency. If a tragic event were to happen, like the Lac Megantic derailment in Canada which killed 47 people, it would take several hours to get an adequate number of personnel to respond. Further, increased rail traffic obstructs traffic on our roads for prolonged periods throughout the day and night. This impacts our emergency response times which could be a life or death situation for many. It also directly impacts our local economy.

Furthermore, there are many waterbody crossings throughout our communities. If a derailment were to happen within a waterbody, it would have disastrous consequences for our lake and rivers which are the source of our drinking water and our tourist based economies.

For these reasons, our cities are opposed to the increase in coal export that will result from the proposed Long View Terminal. We ask you to please reject this proposal.

Sincerely,

  
Shelby Rognstad  
Mayor  
City of Sandpoint

Annie Shaha  
Mayor  
City of Dover

Nancie Lewis  
Mayor  
City of Kootenai

Steve Geiger  
Mayor  
City of Ponderay


# THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW


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## Mudslide causes train to derail in Boundary County

UPDATED: Wed., March 15, 2017, 4:22 p.m.



**A mudslide caused a dozen train cars to derail and some tumbled down a steep hillside Wednesday morning in Boundary County, Idaho. (Courtesy of Boundary County Sheriff's Office)**

**By Chad Sokol**

chadso@spokesman.com

(509) 459-5047



A mudslide caused a dozen train cars to derail and some tumbled down a steep hillside Wednesday morning in Boundary County, Idaho.

Emergency personnel said the cars were loaded with grain and derailed at about 7:30 a.m. on Union Pacific track about four miles north of Highway 2 along Moyie River Road.

Most of the derailed cars slid onto their sides along the tracks, while four tumbled down the hillside, according to a news release from Boundary County Emergency Management. The cars stopped before reaching the Moyie River and no hazardous material was involved.

Officials reviewed photos of the accident and determined that the train vibrated off the tracks as it crossed the section where the mudslide had hit, the release said.

The Boundary County Sheriff's Office took aerial photos of the crash, and crews moved some equipment to reopen Moyie River Road.

Because of steep terrain, Union Pacific may need to transport equipment by rail to the site of the derailment, the release said.

UPDATED: MARCH 15, 2017, 4:22 P.M.

Tags: Boundary County, derailment, idaho, mudslide, trains, transportation, weather

