

Denny Rehberg
State of Montana

**Transportation and
Infrastructure Committee**
Highways and Transit
Aviation

F8

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Agriculture Committee
Department Operations, Oversight,
Nutrition and Forestry, *Vice Chairman*
General Farm Commodities and
Risk Management
Specialty Crops and Foreign
Agriculture Programs

Resources Committee
Energy and Mineral Resources,
Vice Chairman
Forests and Forest Health

December 6, 2004



Surface Transportation Board
Attn: Kenneth Blodgett
Case Control Unit
Washington, DC 20423-0001

RE: STB Docket No. FD 30186 (Sub-No. 3)

Dear Mr. Blodgett:

I am writing to express my support for the Surface Transportation Board ("Board") to approve the Tongue River Railroad Company, Inc. ("TRRC") application for authority to construct and operate the Western Alignment in Tongue River Railroad Company, Inc. – Construction and Operation – Western Alignment, STB Finance Docket 30186 (Sub-No.3). The Western Alignment has been proposed to replace the southernmost 17-miles of the Four Mile Creek alternative alignment approved by the Board in 1996.

The Board issued a Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement ("Draft SEIS") on October 15, 2004. The Draft SEIS addresses the environmental effects and proposed mitigation measures associated with the construction and operation of the Western Alignment. I am of the opinion the Western Alignment offers the most economic, efficient, reliable and safe operating rail alignment. With the mitigation measures proposed by the Board in the Draft SEIS, the construction and operation of the Western Alignment ensures the protection of our state's important natural resources and allow the State of Montana to recognize the economic benefits of this important infrastructure.

As a member of the House of Representatives committees on Resources, Agriculture, and Transportation and Infrastructure, I recognize the important role that coal plays in our nation's energy supply. The State of Montana's ownership of in excess of 630 million tons in the Otter Creek Tracts resulting from the Crown Butte Exchange legislation and resultant transfer of federal coal assets to Montana can play an important role in America's future energy supply. The Tongue River Railroad project provides the key transportation component necessary to develop these valuable assets.

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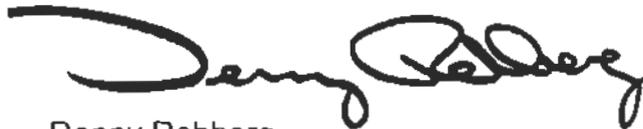
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As I noted in my submittal to the Board in February 2003, the proposed Western Alignment provides the most efficient and dependable rail alignment. I urge the Board to act promptly in approving TRRC's Western Alignment application.

Thank you for your consideration. If I can provide any further information, please contact Jay Martin in my Washington office at 202-225-3211.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Denny Rehberg". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and a long, sweeping underline.

Denny Rehberg
Member of Congress

cc. Roger Nober, Chairman
