

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD CONSIDERS TONGUE RIVER RAILROAD SUPPLEMENTAL APPLICATION TO BUILD RAIL LINE IN S.E. MONTANA

The Surface Transportation Board announced today that it has accepted for consideration the Tongue River Railroad Company Inc.'s (TRRC) supplemental application to build and operate a rail line in southeastern Montana. Low-sulfur, sub-bituminous coal from mining sites in the Otter Creek and Ashland, Mont. area would move over the line.

TRRC filed a revised application for construction authority on October 16, 2012, but modified the planned project with its December 17, 2012 supplemental application. The supplemental application describes TRRC's preferred route on the 42-mile Coldstrip Alignment, between Coldstrip, Mont. and Ashland/Otter Creek, the southern portion of which had been approved for construction by the former Interstate Commerce Commission. The proposed line would be operated solely by the BNSF Railroad Company, which owns a one-third interest in TRRC's parent company.

The Board will now consider the transportation merits of the proposal while its Office of Environmental Analysis (OEA) proceeds with its preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) concerning the proposal's potential environmental impacts. In November 2012, OEA held public scoping meetings in the project area to assist it in defining the range of issues and alternatives to be considered in the EIS. OEA will subsequently issue a final scope of study for the EIS, and, when scoping is completed, OEA will issue a Draft EIS for public review and comment. Comments received will be addressed in a Final EIS, and the Draft and Final EISs (including public comments) will serve as the basis for OEA's recommendations to the Board regarding whether, from an environmental perspective, TRRC's supplemental application should be granted, granted with environmental conditions, or denied.

The Board's decision in [Tongue River Railroad Company, Inc.—Rail Construction and Operation—In Custer, Powder River and Rosebud Counties, Mont., FD 30186](#), may be viewed and downloaded at the Board's website, www.stb.dot.gov, under "E-LIBRARY / Decisions & Notices/ 01/08/13."

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