

PO BOX 201706  
Helena, MT 59620-1706  
(406) 444-3064  
FAX (406) 444-3036

**Energy and Telecommunications Interim Committee**  
**62nd Montana Legislature**

**SENATE MEMBERS**  
ALAN OLSON--Chair  
VERDELL JACKSON  
JIM KEANE  
CLIFF LARSEN

**HOUSE MEMBERS**  
TONY BELCOURT--Vice Chair  
ROBYN DRISCOLL  
HARRY KLOCK  
AUSTIN KNUDSEN

**COMMITTEE STAFF**  
SONJA NOWAKOWSKI, Lead Staff  
TODD EVERTS, Staff Attorney  
DAWN FIELD, Secretary

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Portland District  
Mr. Steve Gagnon  
P.O. Box 2946  
Portland, OR 97208-2946

Dear U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,

The Energy and Telecommunications Interim Committee (ETIC) of the Montana Legislature opposes efforts to expand environmental reviews for port projects proposed in the Pacific Northwest. Increasing exports of U.S. coal is consistent with the goals of the National Export Initiative. However, coal exports are now limited by port capacity in the Pacific Northwest.

With at least two export proposals in the permitting process and other proposals being discussed, the ETIC would like to express its opposition to expanding the environmental reviews already required under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). It is appropriate under NEPA for the Army Corps to prepare individual, site-specific analyses for the individual proposals. A single environmental impact analysis examining all coal export terminal proposals is not needed. Neither NEPA nor the courts require the Army Corps to prepare a single environmental impact statement. Expanding the scope of environmental review beyond the current requirements is unnecessary and will simply delay the permitting process.

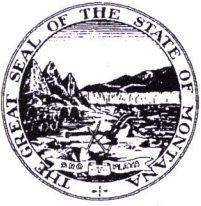
If the United States is to retain its international competitiveness as announced with the National Export Initiative, the Corps' environmental review of pending coal export terminals needs to be completed in a timely manner. These port developments will support the high-paying jobs that the rail and coal industries bring to Montana, as well as the taxes they pay. The projects should not be delayed by unnecessary environmental review. The ETIC respectfully requests that the Army Corps of Engineers follow the law and conduct an environmental review that is specific to the impacts of the port construction.

Sincerely,

Chairman Alan Olson, R-Roundup

cc: Governor Brian Schweitzer  
Senator Max Baucus  
Senator Jon Tester  
Representative Dennis Rehberg

C10429 2206slxa.



PO BOX 201706  
Helena, MT 59620-1706  
(406) 444-3064  
FAX (406) 444-3036

**Energy and Telecommunications Interim Committee**  
**62nd Montana Legislature**

**SENATE MEMBERS**  
ALAN OLSON--Chair  
VERDELL JACKSON  
JIM KEANE  
CLIFF LARSEN

**HOUSE MEMBERS**  
TONY BELCOURT--Vice Chair  
ROBYN DRISCOLL  
HARRY KLOCK  
AUSTIN KNUDSEN

**COMMITTEE STAFF**  
SONJA NOWAKOWSKI, Lead Staff  
TODD EVERTS, Staff Attorney  
DAWN FIELD, Secretary

Montana Rail Link, Inc.  
Jim Lewis, Director of Sales and Marketing  
101 International Drive  
Post Office Box 16390  
Missoula, MT 59808

Dear Mr. Lewis,

As coal producers and suppliers examine opportunities to increase production from mines in Montana and transport it to terminals in the Pacific Northwest, the Energy and Telecommunications Interim Committee (ETIC) of the Montana Legislature would like to request that Montana Rail Link work with BNSF Railway to examine opportunities to route rail traffic through Butte, Montana.

Various communities in Montana -- Billings, Bozeman, Helena, Missoula -- continue to discuss and debate a possible increase in rail traffic and the potential effects. The ETIC would like the company to consider an alternative route as the discussion continues.

The Homestake Pass Line, running from Garrison to Logan, Montana, via Butte, offers an unexplored opportunity. The line was built in the 1880s by the Northern Pacific Railway, and by the 1970s Burlington Northern owned the line, according to area rail experts. The Homestake Pass Line accommodated passenger and freight traffic during its time in service. While not officially abandoned, the line has been inactive since the early 1980s. It is currently owned by the BNSF Railway. Large portions of the line remain operational, and upgrades in the Homestake area are encouraged. The ETIC would ask that Montana Rail Link work with BNSF to upgrade the line so it can again be an active alternative route. This route could potentially accommodate coal trains or other rail traffic to ease concerns in neighboring areas.

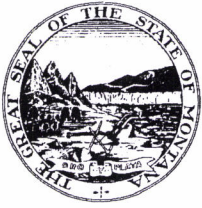
We see the Homestake Pass Line as a viable option to alleviate concerns raised by some communities about increased rail traffic. The community of Butte would welcome the opportunity to learn more about putting this line back into action.

Sincerely,

Chairman Alan Olson, R-Roundup

Senator Jim Keane, D-Butte

CI0429 2202slxa



PO BOX 201706  
Helena, MT 59620-1706  
(406) 444-3064  
FAX (406) 444-3036

**Energy and Telecommunications Interim Committee**  
**62nd Montana Legislature**

**SENATE MEMBERS**  
ALAN OLSON--Chair  
VERDELL JACKSON  
JIM KEANE  
CLIFF LARSEN

**HOUSE MEMBERS**  
TONY BELCOURT--Vice Chair  
ROBYN DRISCOLL  
HARRY KLOCK  
AUSTIN KNUDSEN

**COMMITTEE STAFF**  
SONJA NOWAKOWSKI, Lead Staff  
TODD EVERTS, Staff Attorney  
DAWN FIELD, Secretary

BNSF Railway  
Barbara Ranf, Executive Director of Government Affairs  
800 North Last Chance Gulch, Suite 101  
Helena, MT 59601-3351

Dear Ms. Ranf,

As coal producers and suppliers examine opportunities to increase production from mines in Montana and transport it to terminals in the Pacific Northwest, the Energy and Telecommunications Interim Committee (ETIC) of the Montana Legislature would like to request that BNSF examine opportunities to route rail traffic through Butte, Montana.

Various communities in Montana -- Billings, Bozeman, Helena, Missoula -- continue to discuss and debate a possible increase in rail traffic and the potential effects. The ETIC would like the company to consider an alternative route as the discussion continues.

The Homestake Pass Line, running from Garrison to Logan, Montana, via Butte, offers an unexplored opportunity. The line was built in the 1880s by the Northern Pacific Railway, and by the 1970s Burlington Northern owned the line, according to area rail experts. The Homestake Pass Line accommodated passenger and freight traffic during its time in service. While not officially abandoned, the line has been inactive since the early 1980s. It is currently owned by the BNSF Railway. Large portions of the line remain operational, and upgrades in the Homestake area are encouraged. The ETIC would ask that BNSF examine options to upgrade the line so it can again be an active alternative route. This route could potentially accommodate coal trains or other rail traffic to ease concerns in neighboring areas.

We see the Homestake Pass Line as a viable option to alleviate concerns raised by some communities about increased rail traffic. The community of Butte would welcome the opportunity to learn more about putting this line back into action.

Sincerely,

Chairman Alan Olson, R-Roundup

Senator Jim Keane, D-Butte

CI0429 2202slxb.