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Joshua Wayland, PhD
Surface Transportation Board
c/o ICF
9300 Lee Highway
Fairfax, VA 22031

RE: Docket No. FD 36284
RDCC Project No. 7624

Uinta Basin Railway Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Dear Mr. Wayland,

The Uinta Basin Railway Project is important to the oil and gas industry, and the community I live in and represent. It is critical for improving our economic future in rural Utah. For those reasons I submit the following comments in support of the Uinta Basin Railway EIS. Thank you for permitting me to include my thoughts as you conclude the draft analysis review.

Too often we hear from environmental communities that oil and gas production is not the only option for economic development in eastern Utah. While some may believe that to be true, our economy is based on energy and construction as is indicated in your socioeconomics analysis noted in 3.13.4 (pages 6-7).

The challenge has been how to attract new markets beyond the current energy and construction businesses. We are grateful for the value these industries bring to our community and find our business relationships important to Uintah Basin as is our retail and tourism. But to offer transportation alternatives to current export options of our highly desirable waxy crude to markets outside of Utah means that we can grown our construction industry alongside other supporting business industries.

We are geographically stranded and the current option for transporting our crude to market is by truck over Highway 40 and Highway 191. With rail service we can reach broader domestic markets and attract manufacturing by industries and more jobs in the construction markets.

We will also benefit from an increased tax revenue and mineral lease funding that not only allows us to mitigate the impacts of energy production but also encourage infrastructure expansion. This will attract new manufacturing businesses and expand our current agriculture

production in addition to providing better returns on waxy crude produced in the Basin as we expand our ability to export.

The 500+ page analysis indicates your team has taken a comprehensive approach in reviewing the value of this project. I sincerely appreciate that effort. I hope that the opportunity to grow and diversify our economic future is as important to your team as it is to my district when considering the benefits of the Uinta Basin Railway. Reaching new markets outside of Utah can help stabilize our local production market and jobs. Similarly, eastern Utah will be much more attractive for new businesses with this rail service alternative.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my support for the project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ronald Winterton". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "R" and "W".

Senator Ron Winterton
Utah Senate District 26