

As of October 19, 2009

Comments received on the 2009 Montana State Rail Plan Draft Report

NEW COMMENT

Action Item: Comment on a Project
Submitted: 10/15/2009 20:04:29
Project Commenting On: Montana_Rail_Plan
Nearest Town/City to Project: Deer Lodge
Project Milepost: 185

We've been hearing rumors for several years that the trains through here will be running again. Please help make this more than a rumor or dream. We used the service often when it was available - way back when - and even had a sleeper once in 1974. Our last ride by chance coincided with the train's final run. Oddly enough we couldn't find seats together until we'd walked the length of the train to the very back of the last open car where we were at least within view of each other (4 of us). The sad part was that there were numerous cars just beyond our reach running empty. They were visible strung out behind us on the turns and corners. We were locked out. It always bothered us, why? We would use them even more now that we're getting older. Please bring them back.

NEW COMMENT

Action Item: Comment on a Project
Submitted: 10/15/2009 23:17:44
Project Commenting On: Montana_Rail_Plan
Project State Highway No.: mt
Nearest Town/City to Project: Missoula
Project Milepost: United States
Name: Sarah Bortis
Address Line 1: 325 S 4th W
City: Missoula
State/Province: MT
Postal Code: 59801
Email Address: israe.sarah@gmail.com
Phone Number: 406-728-8835

I am in full support of the establishment of a passenger rail service in the southern region of Montana. Especially one that connected Missoula to the Empire Builder line. Our family loves to travel by rail because it feels like a more environmentally responsible form of travel than flying as well as a potentially less expensive option. It is also a lovely way to see the land that you are travelling through that is much safer than automobile. But in order to strengthen all of the arguments for travelling by rail it needs to be much more convenient and accessible option. Now if we want to travel on the Empire Builder line east or west we have to drive three hours to Whitefish which factors in a considerable expense in time, money and effort. It would be much simple if we could walk downtown to our local station and be connected with the larger national system. Also we would definitely take advantage of service to Butte, Helena and Bozeman, all cities we enjoy visiting and supporting economically as tourist but would be very much more likely to go to as a specific destination if it was as simple and enjoyable as jumping on an Amtrak. Highway travel can be enjoyable, but it is dangerous, expensive and a big pollutant.

It would be a joy to have passenger service directly out of Missoula, linking us with the Empire builder and allowing us to travel through the southern

part of our state with ease. It would be an especial joy if some consideration was put into making sure that freight trains are not always given right of way on rail lines. It is a very unfortunate fact that rail travel at this time means very delayed arrivals and an high potential of missed connections. Many more people would consider this form of transportation if it was more reliable and affordable. I think to make this happen necessarily means giving the living human being passengers right of way on Montana Rail Lines. Please work hard to open the southern rail route. It would only improve Montana's appeal.

NEW COMMENT

Action Item: Comment on a Project
Submitted: 10/15/2009 15:33:48
Project Commenting On: Montana_Rail_Plan
Name: David Strohmaier
Address Line 1: 508 E. Pine
City: Missoula
State/Province: MT
Postal Code: 59802
Email Address: dstrohmaier@ci.missoula.mt.us
Phone Number: (406) 529-5580

I'd respectfully request a two-week extension to the comment period for the State Rail Plan to allow for the release of Amtrak's study of the North Coast Hiawatha.

Dave Strohmaier
Alderman
Missoula City Council, Ward 1

NEW COMMENT

From: * Grudge [<mailto:grudge@bresnan.net>]
Sent: Thursday, October 15, 2009 12:44 AM
To: Kenny, Janet
Subject: Fwd: [Powell_County_News] Passenger train comments sought by Oct. 15

yes yes yes

NEW COMMENT

From: Brighton Keith [<mailto:beartoothfjords@cablemt.net>]
Sent: Sunday, October 18, 2009 7:44 PM
To: Kenny, Janet
Subject: Passenger Trains

My family would like to see passenger service return to southern Montana. With continuing high airline prices train travel would offer us a good option for travel to both the East and to the West coast.

We have been unable to use the train service because of the difficulty traveling to northern Montana to use this service.

We live in Red Lodge, MT and weather can often be a detriment to travel by car. Please give serious consideration to restoring this service.

Sincerely,
Keith Brighton
Red Lodge, MT
(406) 425-1122



Barbara A. Ranf
Director, Government Affairs

BNSF Railway Company

825 Great Northern Blvd.,
Suite 105
Helena, Montana 59601-3340

Phone 406-443-2102
Fax 406-449-8610
barbara.ranf@bnsf.com

October 15, 2009

Zia Kazimi
Janet Kenny
MDT Special Studies Section
2701 Prospect Ave.
P.O. Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001

BNSF appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on the draft 2009 Montana State Rail Plan. We believe that it is important to have a transportation plan for the state and we stand ready to assist the state to produce an accurate and current report so that its objective to shape the discussion of a number of critical public policy decisions facing Montana in the future can be realized.

Since the express goal of the 2009 Montana State Rail Plan to provide a "current" and future view of the rail system and rail issues within the state, it is hard to understand why the state relies on outdated information when so much current information is readily available. For example, freight statistics through second quarter 2009 are available. In addition, independent studies done by Christensen and National Rail Freight Infrastructure Capacity and Investment Study are far more current than the RL Banks study cited in this report. There are other examples in which the draft body of work contains numerous conclusions based on other dated "studies" and anecdotal "surveys" that fall short of the type of academic rigor that should be expected as the basis for framing future investment and policy decisions.

For example, when discussing the implications of grain facility consolidation in Montana in Section 5, the plan depends upon reports and surveys without qualifying their empirical viability. This includes the discussion of the effects of facility consolidation on roads, for which the plan admittedly lacks even its own empirical support. The plan is limited by discussing facility consolidation in terms of haul distance, road wear, and additional cost to producers, without framing the topic in terms of net benefit, not only to railroads, elevators, and export houses, but to all producers in terms of reduced cost, greater market and capacity access.

There is no question that consolidation of grain handling facilities does create relative winners and losers depending upon their relative distances from the new versus the old facility. However, private capital is not invested without the high probability of improved returns from that investment. Therefore, the investors must have calculated the total bushel draw for the new facility versus the old facility and concluded that the combination of cheaper freight rates and more efficient handling of the producer's crops justified their considerable investment. Further, if the counties where these facilities were built considered the investment benefits to be less than

the public cost, then why did they not incorporate those assumed costs in the permitting process? Clearly, from the experience of this US-wide consolidation process, the unbiased economic conclusion has to be that the overall economic benefit exceeds the costs. As for the study's assertion that, "the railroads and export shippers appear to be reaping the financial benefits of the efficiency improvements grain shuttles facilities provide", not only do you provide no compelling evidence to support this assertion but defies reason in the competitive agriculture market place. Irrespective of the rail issue, grain companies compete for the farmers' grain and producers ship to their best markets. Therefore, a given company must use the materially reduced freight rate to competitively draw grain to its facility. Building a grain elevator provides no return on investment unless it buys grain and Montana's grower associations will confirm that the overall markets and prices paid to its farmers have improved from transportation productivity gains. As for productivity gains not being passed on through our freight rates, the per car difference between shuttle and non-shuttle rates are much less than what the US governments own Uniform Rail Costing System calculates. Therefore, by their calculation, Montana producers are getting about 50% of those productivity gains.

Another example of this study's failure to include all of the salient facts is its failure to mention the rate arbitration agreement that was signed with Montana producers on January 31, 2009. Its existence renders moot the report's comments regarding rate reasonableness and fairness. With the current arbitration agreement readily available to all Montana producers, rate reasonableness issues—including mediation—can be quickly dispensed with through an efficient and cost-effective process.

You also failed to include a copy of our detailed and fact-based rebuttal to the cited 2009 Railroad Rate Report prepared by the State Attorney General's office. We have attached a copy for the record.

Finally, we would suggest if the purpose of the Plan is to bring the Montana rail situation into "real time" that it lacks detail related to current service levels and car supply and fails to recognize the significant impact of several Montana producer organizations' ongoing communication and mediation efforts with BNSF.

The plan acknowledges the "The National Rail Freight Infrastructure Capacity and Investment Study" that was released by the Association of American Railroads with information regarding projected rail service levels in 2035 without infrastructure improvements, yet provides no information regarding the State's position or recommendations as to their role in future infrastructure investment.

We have also attached a copy BNSF Commuter Rail Principles as additional information to the Passenger Rail Section and the pending Amtrak study on feasibility and costs estimates for implementing passenger rail service on the southern route.

Sincerely,



Barbara Ranf

Enc.



NEWS

Contact: Suann Lundsberg
817-867-6275

BNSF Disputes Report Issued by Montana Attorney General's Office: Distortion of Facts Based on Out-dated Data

FORT WORTH, Texas, Feb. 26, 2009 –BNSF Railway Company strongly disagrees with the Montana Attorney General's report released today regarding rail transportation.

“Contrary to this report, BNSF is doing great things for Montana producers and is providing best-of-class service at reasonable rates, which enhances Montana producers ability to compete in world markets,” said Kevin Kaufman, group vice president, Agricultural Products. “This report is wrong and inaccurately portrays BNSF rates and service.”

Over the past several years, BNSF has been meeting with Montana producers on a regular basis to discuss and resolve rate, service, fuel surcharge and other issues. In addition, BNSF placed an ombudsman in Montana, developed an Ag Rail Business Council, and most recently signed a mediation and arbitration rate dispute agreement with the Montana Grain Growers Association (MGGA) and the Montana Farm Bureau Federation.

“BNSF's relationship with producers is getting better all the time and we're proud of that,” Kaufman said. “We wholeheartedly stand by our rates. This is why we have entered into a voluntary arbitration and mediation process that will hold us accountable and bring transparency to the process. If Montana shippers are being charged excessive freight rates for substandard service why would we subject ourselves to this process?”

BNSF believes this study paints a distorted view of BNSF's rail rates by using old 2006 data that is misleading. BNSF tariff rates for Montana have not materially increased since 2005; however, its costs have. Therefore, revenue-to-variable cost ratios reported in this study are obviously inflated.

The study also claims that BNSF's service for Montana shippers is "substandard". BNSF couldn't disagree more.

"You will be hard-pressed to find a Montana shipper who says that our service is substandard," Kaufman said. "The facts are that by any measure, service to Montana shippers has steadily improved since 2005 and has never been better than what it is today. For the past three years, harvest past due orders for rail cars have been virtually nil and readily available."

The study also claims that BNSF has used pricing to encourage 110-car trains (shuttles), forcing many smaller elevators to go out of business. The fact is that the majority of shipments out of Montana are non-shuttle shipments and that we supply more non-shuttle cars than shuttle cars to our non-shuttle customers. Additionally, rates for single-car shipments are cheaper on a revenue-to-variable-cost basis than shuttle rates.

BNSF's commitment to working with Montana producers has led to industry leading changes. For example, in 2006, BNSF changed its fuel surcharge program from a percent of transportation rate to a mileage-based program to be responsive to Montana shipper concerns.

"We couldn't be more honored and pleased that Montana producers have chosen to work with BNSF to create an environment of good will that focuses on market development and a more efficient process to get Montana producer products to market," Kaufman said. "We are also pleased that our efforts actually add value to Montana producers instead of potentially costing them \$3 million in research."

About BNSF

A subsidiary of Burlington Northern Santa Fe Corporation (NYSE:BNI), BNSF Railway Company operates one of the largest North American rail networks, with about 32,000 route miles in 28 states and two Canadian provinces. BNSF employs about 2,000 Montanans with a payroll of \$120 million.

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COMMUTER RAIL

BNSF Commuter Principles

BNSF is willing to cooperate on commuter rail studies and provide state and local officials with information. Where commuter service is proposed on a minimally used line that BNSF is willing to sell, BNSF shall be paid fair market value for the property. Where commuter service is proposed on a line BNSF intends to continue owning and to be jointly used for commuter and freight use, the following principles apply:

- Any commuter operation cannot degrade BNSF's freight service or negatively affect BNSF's freight customers or BNSF's ability to provide them with service.
- BNSF must be compensated for any and all costs incurred in providing commuter service and make a reasonable return for providing the service.
- Capital investments necessary for commuter service are the responsibility of the public, including investments for future capacity which is potentially more expensive, especially in urbanized areas.
- BNSF will not incur any liability for commuter operations that it would not have but for those operations. These operations are provided by BNSF primarily as a public service; the relatively modest compensation BNSF receives does not begin to justify assuming the significant liability associated with passenger service.
- Studies of how commuter service might be provided must take into account not only the current freight traffic levels, but projected freight traffic growth.
- Investments made for commuter projects must not result in BNSF incurring a higher tax burden. Property improvements should not become part of our tax base; materials used should be exempt from all sales and use taxes, etc. or BNSF must be made whole for any increased tax burden.
- BNSF must retain operating control of rail facilities used for commuter service. All dispatching, maintenance and construction must be done under the control of BNSF. Passenger stations, parking lots and other non-rail facilities may be publicly owned and operated.
- Studies must reflect BNSF's actual operating conditions and cost structures. For example, construction work estimates must reflect

our labor contract costs and schedules cannot assume that we will not operate any freight trains during peak commuter periods.

- BNSF will limit commuter operations to the commuter schedules initially agreed upon and for which the capital improvement plan has been designed. Future expansions will have to undergo the same analysis and provide any required capital improvements before schedules can be altered, service added, or stations added.
- Improvements must include grade crossing protection and inter-track fencing as required to minimize the risk of accidents, due to liability and service interruption concerns.



NEW COMMENT

From: Leslie Ames
Sent: 10/15/09
President/Shelter Manager
Basset Rescue of Mt.
Ph: 406-207-0765
Email: bassetrescuemt@gmail.com
bassetrescueofmontana.org

Highly in favor of trains in Montana.

NEW COMMENT

From: Kimberly Brown
Sent: 10/15/09

I would vote yes to restore train transportation to Southwest Montana.
Kimberley Brown
Ramsay, Montana

NEW COMMENT

From: Lou McIntosh [mailto:loosehay@hotmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, October 15, 2009 8:17 PM
To: Kenny, Janet
Subject: Amtrak

I'm writing to express my support for the proposed addition of an Amtrak line between Billings and Missoula. My family and I enjoy train travel very much and have been on several Amtrak trips. However, to board the train we currently have to drive at least three hours so having a line run through southern Montana would be much more convenient for us and many others. I look forward to boarding an Amtrak train in Helena or Missoula should the line be established! Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Lou McIntosh

NEW COMMENT

From: Gibson McIntosh [mailto:hootgibson007@hotmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, October 15, 2009 8:11 PM
To: Kenny, Janet
Subject: Passenger train route through Billings, Bozeman, & Missoula

Hi Janet, I would like to express my full support for the proposed service route through Billings, Bozeman, and Missoula. I myself have been on Amtrak trips to Seattle, Vancouver, Portland, Wisconsin, Chicago, and others. I find that the train travel experience is far more enjoyable, and much less stressful. In a car or on a plane, one can't help but feel rushed, and it is not nearly as spacious as a train. Viewing the scenery, talking with other passengers, and the overall comfort make train travel in my opinion the most ideal. I know that I am not alone in this regard, either. Many people enjoy this laid back form of travel, and would be delighted to have a southern route through Montana. And if this was accomplished, it would create possibilities for others who would otherwise never experience train travel. Thank you for this consideration. Sincerely, Gibson McIntosh

NEW COMMENT

From: Bill & Sue Brown [mailto:lkmt@bresnan.net]
Sent: Thursday, October 15, 2009 7:44 PM
To: Kenny, Janet
Subject: Return the Train

My husband and I are definitely in favor of having the rail lines through Montana re-established. Please help this become a reality. We would use both a route to Mpls and a route to Denver. Thanks for anything you can do for us. William Jay and Susan J Brown, Deer Lodge

NEW COMMENT

From: kevin [mailto:lilliput@blackfoot.net]
Sent: Thursday, October 15, 2009 8:25 AM
To: Kenny, Janet
Subject: montana rail

hi, i am writing in support of expanded amtrak service. i am in missoula and would love to be able to train to seattle; denver; and within montana for meetings. a separate subject that should be considered is a light rail system from hamilton to polson through missoula.

thanks,
kevin eichhorn
34319 sod farm road
arlee, mt 59821
406 726 3399

NEW COMMENT

From: Lee Deming [mailto:leedeming@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, October 14, 2009 7:49 PM
To: Kenny, Janet
Subject: RR

Please restore passenger rail service along the Southern Montana route from Missoula east along I-90

NEW COMMENT

From: Gram [GramCat414@webtv.net]
Sent: Wednesday, October 14, 2009 7:41 PM
To: Kenny, Janet
Subject: Train Service

It would be great to have train service restored!! Please add my name (Roberta Patton, Box 59, Elliston, Mt. 59728 to the list of folks in favor of this.

Thank You.

NEW COMMENT

From: Honeycutt, Barbara [mailto:barbh@montana.edu]
Sent: Wednesday, October 14, 2009 8:31 AM
To: Kenny, Janet
Subject: Extended Passenger Service

I would like to add my support for the establishment of passenger train service to include Billings, Bozeman, Butte, Helena, and Missoula. It is a

service I would definitely use. I would also be a benefit to me personally if service could include Great Falls. Thank you.

Barbara Honeycutt
250 Ferndale Drive
Bigfork MT 59911

NEW COMMENT

From: Heather McIntosh [mailto:macnbuggy@hotmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, October 14, 2009 8:40 AM
To: Kenny, Janet
Subject: MDT-Amtrak proposal

I highly support the idea of having an Amtrak passenger service through Billings, Bozeman, Helena, and Missoula. I live in Avon and would love to be able to use a passenger train service. Thank you,

Sincerely,
Heather McIntosh, elementary school teacher

NEW COMMENT

From: hdsnjet@juno.com [mailto:hdsnjet@juno.com]
Sent: Wednesday, October 14, 2009 9:18 AM
To: Kenny, Janet

Hello yes, I think a train through the deer lodge valley is a great idea, lets do it! Stopping in garrison is even better since I live there. H

NEW COMMENT

From: Marcia Palm [mailto:palmderosa@blackfoot.net]
Sent: Wednesday, October 14, 2009 11:34 AM
To: Kenny, Janet
Subject: passenger trains

I would be so pleased to see the passenger trains return to this area. Missoula, Helena, Garrison, Billings, Bozeman etc. I know many people from this area that would support this venture.

Marcia Palm, Helmville,MT

NEW COMMENT

From: Jill McIntosh [mailto:mcintosh@agristar.net]
Sent: Wednesday, October 14, 2009 1:11 PM
To: Kenny, Janet
Subject: proposed Amtrak Route

We would like to express whole hearted support for the proposed passenger service route Billings, Bozeman, Helena, and Missoula. Our family has used Amtrak for trips to Chicago, Wisconsin, Seattle, Portland and beyond. We not only enjoy train travel but prefer it to flying and driving. The closest place to board however is Shelby or Whitefish and that is a definite drawback when we live in Avon (35 miles west of Helena). We own the Birdseye Mercantile in Avon that could even serve as a boarding station!! A southern route would be very convenient for us and many others and I am sure that it would mean more train travel for us. Thank you for your consideration.

Bill and Jill McIntosh

NEW COMMENT

From: Bob Rase [mailto:rjrased@yahoo.com]
Sent: Wednesday, October 14, 2009 3:00 PM
To: Kenny, Janet
Subject: trains running east to west

How could we not get excited at this prospect?? Bob and I are 100 percent for this and thrilled to even think it might be a possibility- Nothing would be neater than to have an alternative means of transportation through some of the most beautiful country in the United States- Count us in and we will be glad to help in any way.

Johanna and Bob Rase
936 Milwaukee Ave.
Deer Lodge, Montana 59722

NEW COMMENT

From: Susan Deming [mailto:susan_deming@yahoo.com]
Sent: Wednesday, October 14, 2009 2:04 PM
To: Kenny, Janet
Subject: Train Southern Route

Please add my name to the list of people who desperately want the southern train route. I drive to Shelby or Havre to catch the northern route when I want to visit family in the mid-west. I would certainly use the southern route also. My in-laws are elderly but still love to travel. They live in Missoula and are unable to drive very long or fly at all, but they have mentioned the train option many times. They would love to use it if available. Please open up the southern route! Thanks.

Susan Deming 2215 Winne Ave, Helena MT 59601

NEW COMMENT

From: dianne evans [mailto:d.evans@bresnan.net]
Sent: Tuesday, October 13, 2009 8:29 AM
To: Kenny, Janet
Subject: Amtrak

I am writing this email to show my support for the proposed Amtrak passenger service through Billings, Bozeman, Helena, Missoula, etc. I know this would be a great service and I believe it would be used more than people could imagine. As a child, my grandmother and I used to get on a train and go to Spokane and Seattle. I don't think the trips would have ever been possible without the train. As I am getting older myself, I cannot drive at night and have a hard time staying awake when driving so train service would be wonderful for me and I believe for a lot of the aging population. It is a fast and super fun way to travel, and I feel would be an economic boost to Montana.

I am so hoping that we can get service again and I applaud everyone who is trying to get it passed. Thank you!

Diane Evans
705 Idaho
Deer Lodge, MT 59722

NEW COMMENT

From: Nick Shrauger [mailto:nicksh@theglobal.net]
Sent: Tuesday, October 13, 2009 12:49 PM
To: Kenny, Janet
Subject: Passenger Trains, Southern Route

I have long been an advocate of passenger rail service on the southern MT route. In fact for the whole country. Having spent 3 weeks in Europe this summer using only rail convinces me that it is the way to go. The U.S. will never be able to build enough highways and roads to handle all the cars. Convenient rail travel will make it possible to comfortably and reasonably travel to the west coast and other shorter trips. Please include my vote as a YES!

Nick Shrauger
7825 Gooch Hill Road
Bozeman, MT 59718
(406) 586-5113

NEW COMMENT

From: Leaman Sullivan [mailto:sullee3@comcast.net]
Sent: Tuesday, October 13, 2009 4:33 PM
To: Kenny, Janet

We read in the Silver State Post that the train might be coming back and we were delighted. We are from Deer Lodge and live in Oregon--we are getting older and it would be great to be able to get to Missoula and Helena to visit relatives without driving. We could even come in the winter--which we did when the trains were running. Sylvia and Leaman Sullivan

NEW COMMENT

From: Sheepfevr@aol.com [mailto:Sheepfevr@aol.com]
Sent: Tuesday, October 13, 2009 8:39 PM
To: Kenny, Janet
Subject: passenger train rout across Southern Montana

I would love to see passenger train travel across Southern Montana. Historically this route helped thousand like my parents travel out of Montanan to other cites in the west and east. The Air travel is very expensive from Montana and we need options to travel. Thanks for considering this route and consider this my voice of support. Thanks for your time and consideration.

Casey and Mary Johnston
2808 Elizabeth Warren
Butte, Montana 59701

NEW COMMENT

From: kayo [mailto:horsebooks@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, October 12, 2009 11:57 AM
To: Kenny, Janet
Subject: Passenger trains

An article in the Silver State Post in Deer Lodge, suggested we contact you about passenger train service through here going east and west. YES, YES, YES!!!!!! Yes, please consider this. I would love to hop on a train to go to Missoula, Spokane or Seattle! It would allow me to visit family in the Seattle area - or catch a plane in Spokane or visit friends in Missoula!

It has been too difficult for my daughter to come from Michigan to see us - since we have to travel so far north to meet a train. We also have a business where people come here to learn how to drive horses and I think if they could hop on a train - it would be more convenient than flying into Montana. What a treat it would be to see the west via train!

When I was younger - I thought I wanted to hop freight just for the adventure - but my boyfriend at the time made me PROMISE I would never do that... he said it is too dangerous for women in particular... so with a passenger train coming through here - I could hop it instead!

Yay! Glad you are considering this mode of transportation for us here in the southern part of Montana! I think this will open up the west once again!

Ms Kayo Fraser
Deer Lodge, MT

NEW COMMENT

From: J. Bloomquist [mailto:bronco44@live.com]
Sent: Monday, October 12, 2009 1:17 PM
To: Kenny, Janet
Subject: The Old Hiawatha Route

PLEASE restore the old Hiawatha Railroad link through Billings/Helena/Missoula. The people of Powell/Deer Lodge/Silverbow want it and need it. Thanx
JR Bloomquist
Deer Lodge

NEW COMMENT

From: Judy Wood [mailto:jmwp77@hotmail.com]
Sent: Monday, October 12, 2009 12:19 PM
To: Kenny, Janet
Subject: AMTRAK

I have been a traveler on Amtrak for years but unfortunately live in the southern part of Montana (Deer Lodge with a business in Garrison of all places.) I have family in Minnesota so we still travel back and forth on the train but it is quite the inconvenience having to travel north to get on the train. I know for certain that I would be travelling much more as well as the rest of my family and friends with the southern route. Plus, using the train to send freight would be a real plus. If not travelling to the east, using the train for shorts trips to Missoula or Butte would be a real plus.
JWood

NEW COMMENT

P. O. Box 162
Glendive, MT 59330
October 11, 2009

Montana Department of Transportation
P. O. Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001

Mr. Jim Lynch, Director
MDT

Ms. Lynn Zanto, Administrator
Rail, Transit and Planning Division

Mr. Zia Kazimi, Rail Planner
Rail, Transit and Planning Division

Ms. Janet Kenny, Rail Planner
Rail, Transit and Planning Division

Mr. Hal Fossum, Rail Planner
Rail, Transit and Planning Division

Ladies and Gentlemen:

My name is Barry Green and I would like to offer my remarks, comments, and questions to the **2009 Montana State Rail Plan Draft Report** prepared for the Montana Department of Transportation by Cambridge Systematics, Inc. This is a very informative report with valuable information relevant to rail freight and rail passenger infrastructure and operations throughout the state of Montana.

Prior to my observations, I wish to relay that the following items that I've identified or remarks that I've offered are my own and are in no way meant to criticize those involved that did the research and authored this document. I would like to believe that my notations will help to improve on this "Draft Report." Also, I have worked for the rail industry for a little over 30 years in Glendive in operations and am also the National Association of Railroad Passengers (NARP) Representative for the members that reside in Montana. I am not an official spokesperson for any of the freight carriers or Amtrak but feel that my tenure within the rail industry should allow me to offer some credible insight. In the end, I'm certain some of the items that I've highlighted have already been found or identified by others and will be corrected accordingly.

Page – ES-7 – Proposed rail line(s) for the Tongue River Railroad south of Miles City is missing. I'm aware of previous Montana Rail System maps that have shown this proposed rail line. Feel that it should be included.

Page – ES-8 – Signal Peak Energy mine is now operating and hauling coal to Broadview and points east.

Pages – 2-31 – 2-32 – Referencing the paragraph below Figure 2.26 chart – Is the 2035 projected Average Annual Daily Truck Traffic increases based upon both interstate and intrastate truck traffic or just one or the other? The longer haul truck traffic would best be served more efficiently via rail than over at least the primary roads that parallel the State’s rail system.

Page – 2-34 – **2.6 Conclusions** – I noticed that the forest industry isn’t mentioned and was wondering if there is the opinion that this industry won’t grow as much within the state into the future?

Page 3-6 – **3.2 Montana’s Railroads** – Explanations of CTC, OCS, TWC, BRT, and ABS. Some of the descriptions for these forms of main track authorization for trains or men and equipment are not 100% accurate.

CTC – As a clarification to the second sentence, intermediate signals between what are known as CTC control points, would operate automatically and are not under the direct control of a Train Dispatcher. Those CTC signals located at entrances to sidings or into yards or terminals are under the direct control of a Train Dispatcher.

OCS – This form of authority is not specific to dark or un-signalized territory. It could also be found within signalized systems. OCS is a separate form of main track authorization as is CTS, TWC, and BRT.

TWC – While TWC is usually the preferred method of main track authorization within dark or un-signalized territory, TWC is also used within ABS territory which includes a series of signals.

BRT – Definition of Restricted Speed – A speed that permits a train to stop within one-half the range of vision, (short of various identified obstructions) and not exceeding 20 MPH. (Note – A crew might handle their train at 1 MPH up to and no more than 20 MPH as long as they feel they can stop within one-half the range of vision.)

Page 3-7 – **Union Pacific Railroad** – Within the second paragraph, reference is made to 7 miles of running track, 1 mile of way-switching, and 8 miles of yard switching. While I feel that I know what “yard switching” refers to, what does the author mean by “running track” and “way-switching”?

Page 3-12 – The addition of the new BNSF Broadview Subdivision should be added to Figure 3.4 BNSF Statewide System Overview.

Page 3-18 – 4th line – Feel that “Mountain View Coop” should be “Mountain View Co-op” as shown on their web site.

Page 3-20 – 2nd line – I believe that “Cenex Harvest States Coop or (Co-op)” is now referred to as “Cenex Harvest States (CHS), Inc.” as shown on their web site.

Page 3-25 – **Subdivision M – “Cooper City”** should read “Copper City”. 1st line – “The “Cooper City Main Line” should read “The Copper City Main Line”.

Page 3-35 – **Subdivision W – Circle** – The segment between Fisher Sand & Gravel and Lindsay is being used to store rail cars that are not currently needed within the rail car fleet similar to the rail cars being stored on the Helena Sub.

Page 3-40 – 3rd line – The siding of Spurling is actually “west” of Laurel instead of “east” of Laurel as noted in the text.

Page 3-41 – As far as I know, the reference to “FRA Excepted Track” effectively limiting operations to a maximum of 10 MPH has nothing to do with MRL’s main track through any of the cities of Livingston, Bozeman, and Helena and may have something to do with yard or customer spur tracks which would probably never be used by a passenger train making scheduled stops at these locations.

Page 3-53 – **Yellowstone Valley Railroad (YVR)** – Reference is made to a maximum track speed of 45 MPH on the southerly segment between Snowden and Glendive. At start up, YVR’s maximum track speed for this segment was 40 MPH; however, whether it is listed as 40 or 45 MPH, there are several long segments of 25 MPH between the two end points along with slower speeds through the cities of Sidney and Fairview. Train speed between Snowden and Glendive is not a constant 40 or 45 MPH.

On the northerly segment, between Plentywood and Redstone, the BNSF utilizes this segment of track to store rail cars that are not currently needed within the rail car fleet.

Page 3-59 – **Global Rail (Formerly Referred to as Bull Mountain Rail)** – Text should be updated as the line is now in operation.

Page 4-2 – **Empire Builder** – 1st paragraph – “Seattle, Portland and Spokane Railway” should read “Spokane, Portland and Seattle Railway”.

Page – 4-15 – If the former Bozeman Passenger Station would have to be razed, then consideration should be given to building a new station facility between Bozeman and Belgrade, and probably closer to Belgrade, which is where the airport is located as well as the highway route south (Gallatin Gateway) to Yellowstone National Park.

Page – 4-24 – **State Funding Implications** – “The FRA has clearly indicated that it has no plans to provide any funding to offset the operating costs of passenger rail services built or expanded with Federal grants.” Observation – While I agree today that the FRA would not use its budget to provide funding as stated in this sentence, that doesn’t preclude the fact that actions taken by Congress in the future may authorize and subsequently appropriate funding that would be funneled through the FRA for distribution to the states for rail passenger services.

3rd line from bottom of this segment – “SCR” – Does this stand for “Southern Corridor Route”?

Page 5-8 – With the amount of grains produced within the state of Montana and the fact that many rail branch lines no longer exist to haul this product due to the railroads having either spun off or abandoned these lines in Montana during the 1980’s has definitely caused a tremendous burden on our state’s highway system. This whole issue should have been addressed by the citizens of Montana most impacted and subsequently avoided when these rail lines were being jettisoned. Fast forward to today and we now have a bigger problem when it comes to maintaining a safe and efficient state highway system that is under more stress than before from large farm trucks that are hauling their grain products to the nearest grain shuttle facility located along the nearest main line in the state.

Pages 5-11 – 5-12 – **5.4 Implications of Grain Shuttle Facilities** – Agree with this assessment 100%. For a variety of reasons, many of which are noted in this report, Montana, along with many other rural states, should have worked to retain many rail branch line operations. Obviously, some of these lines were probably redundant but many should have been kept in operation. The ball was dropped on this issue.

Page 7-1 – **7.1 Montana Rail Competition** – 2nd paragraph – Add the word “Chicago” ahead of “Milwaukee, St. Paul, and Pacific Railroad...”

3rd paragraph – Feel that “southern BNSF railroad” should read “southern BN railroad” or “southern BN(SF) railroad” account the BNSF didn’t come into existence until Sept. 22, 1995.

Page 7-6 – 1st paragraph – 4th line from bottom – “if lower rail revenues lead to less spending on track or equipment, which could cause locomotive “velocity” to decrease, add more slow orders on track,.....

Consider changing the word “velocity” to “utilization” account fewer locomotives would mean limited utilization within the available power fleet to move trains. It would be due to the slow orders on the track that would decrease the velocity of the locomotive and not a decrease in “locomotive velocity” due to lower rail revenues.

Page 7-19 – **7.2 Intermodal Service** – I read the facts and figures but still don’t understand why a second intermodal terminal can’t operate effectively and efficiently within the state of Montana outside of the existing one at Billings. It would seem that one other intermodal terminal should be financially operational somewhere across the Hi-Line as was once located in Shelby.

Page 7-32 – **Rail Service and Energy Policy** –
Energy Efficiency – Additional facts and figures from the Association of America Railroads (AAR) web site. (<http://www.aar.org/Environment/Environment.aspx>)

Railroads move 43 percent of the nation’s intercity freight volume and are the “greenest,” most fuel-efficient form of ground transportation today. We have the numbers to prove it:

- A freight train can move a ton of freight an average of 436 miles on a single gallon of fuel. That's close to four times as far as it could move by truck.
- A train can take the load of 280 trucks off the road. That's like removing 1,100 cars from the road.
- Each ton-mile of freight moved by rail rather than highway reduces greenhouse gas emissions by two-thirds or more.
- Freight trains are three or more times more fuel-efficient than trucks.
- If only 10 percent of freight currently moved by highway switched to rail, national fuel savings would exceed one billion gallons of fuel a year and greenhouse gas emissions would fall by 12 million tons.
- By improving their fuel efficiency, freight railroads have, on average, reduced their greenhouse gas emissions by 20 million tons every year since 1980.

In closing, thank you for your time and consideration of my remarks, suggestions, and questions. Should you have any questions or would like further clarification on any of the comments that I've offered, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely yours,

Barry E. Green

Barry E. Green
(406)-377-8056 (Home)
(406)-939-3059 (Cell)
bgreen@midrivers.com (E-mail)

cc: File - Glendive

NEW COMMENT

From: nanc [<mailto:boxerb@blackfoot.net>]
Sent: Saturday, October 10, 2009 11:36 AM
To: Kazimi, Zia; Kenny, Janet
Subject: Montana State Rail Plan

I am writing as a long time resident of Missoula who did ride Amtrak from Chicago to Missoula in the early seventies, and I would do so again in my 60's. The service has been greatly missed and driving north to Whitefish not a feasible solution for me. I still have family in the midwest (97 year old father most importantly) and drive myself back almost every 2-3 months. I would greatly appreciate and alternative that gives me the flexibility that driving does, but not the difficulty.

I want to express my support of investment in restoring the North Coast Hiawatha rail system and the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement act of 2008. A regular passenger rail that ties together Missoula and Billings, the two largest metropolitan areas in Montana, and Chicago with Seattle seems to be an important step towards practical transportation in a world with serious concerns about energy, environment, increased population, and the economic needs of communities. I do not believe that we can sustain the lifestyle

based on the level and methods of energy consumption that exists today. I believe that climate change is real and needs to be addressed in significantly more effective ways. I believe that rail travel and shipping is much more energy efficient than other modes of transportation and should become a priority as it is in Europe.

Thank you for your time.
Sincerely,
Nancy H. Brown

NEW COMMENT

Action Item: Comment on a Project
Submitted: 10/09/2009 09:42:46
Project Commenting On: Montana_Rail_Plan
Name: Mark Huston
Address Line 1: 250 Hellgate Dr
City: Missoula
State/Province: MT
Postal Code: 59802
Email Address: mark_huston@hotmail.com
Phone Number: 406-623-9876

I support the plan to reinstate passenger rail service to Southern MT, however it would do no good unless the entire line is reinstated. A rail line between Missoula and Billings only would not be very useful. I believe the entire North Coast Hiawatha line should be reinstated.

NEW COMMENT

Action Item: Comment on a Project
Submitted: 10/09/2009 06:46:06
Project Commenting On: Montana_Rail_Plan

I am commenting on the proposed project to reinstate the North Coast Hiawatha rail line in Montana. I think it is a great idea and that rail service needs to be expanded in this country as an alternative to using the car or flying. I just spent a month in Europe and it is such a pleasure to use their rail system. It is very efficient, inexpensive and provides service to almost any place you would want to go. If we could just get our trains to run on schedule here we would certainly be ahead of the game and expanding service would be very helpful as an alternative way to travel. We could take a lesson from the Europeans.

I would also like to see passenger rail service offered from Missoula to Whitefish but I understand that the rails would have to be completely replaced and will probably not happen in my lifetime but what a great way to get to Glacier National Park from here without having to make that drive in a car.

NEW COMMENT

Action Item: Comment on a Project
Submitted: 10/05/2009 20:07:10
Project Commenting On: Montana_Rail_Plan

I consider passenger rail service to Missoula a high priority. Please continue to work towards that goal. The current Amtrak service through Whitefish is 90 miles from where I live and not "service". Most people in Montana live in the southern part of the state so it is a bit

perplexing why Amtrak would not service this area, and instead expect us to travel 90 miles up to Whitefish.

NEW COMMENT

From: njwheeler@bresnan.net [mailto:njwheeler@bresnan.net]
Sent: Monday, October 05, 2009 8:43 AM
To: Kenny, Janet
Subject: Montana Rail Plan

Hi, I read the article in the Missoulian about the plans to bring back Amtrak to Missoula. I recently contacted Amtrak asking when that service would be available and they said they had no plans at this time. I am 64 years old and don't like driving long distances any more. Train service to California and North Dakota would be a godsend to me. I would really like to see it by next spring. I also have family members who will not fly. It would benefit them also. Who do I contact to make my voice heard? Thank you, Nancy Wheeler

NEW COMMENT

From: bernard mues [mailto:bernardmues@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, October 05, 2009 11:26 AM
To: Kenny, Janet
Subject: restore North Coast Hiawatha route. :

As a resident of Deer Lodge, where we will soon hopefully hv a 10- mile long walking/bicycling path along the Clark Fork River btwm D.L. & Garrison, it wld be sweet to bicycle down early in the morning to catch the train, hang up my bike on a hook (like they do on the light rail trains in Portland, OR), & go to Missoula to see a Griz ftbl game & do some shopping/sightseeing --- or to even take my fishing pole/ backpack & hop off somewhere for a day of fishing &/or hiking.

Cognizant of the greater Amtrak security & other requirements, lack of correct same-day skeds within Montana for back & forth travel, & the 95% emphasis on "through" traffic to the West Coast (which does not greatly benefit Montana's economy fm passengers who do not step off the train in Montana to spend money) --- there may be a greater "long-term" economic generator benefit to the State of Montana if a "separate State & private consortium" (Denny Washington?) was formed to mainly service Montana passengers traveling back & forth in Montana (Billings to Missoula), w/ better same-day skeds, prices & services. These separate Montana trains cld run in coordination w/ Amtrak trains, or alone. If the correct service is not there mainly for most Montanans who travel within Montana, then why allow Montana to be simply used for mostly 95% "through" travel? Except for those few passengers who may want to hassle w/ a total 180-mile round-trip off the train at Livingston to & fm Yellowstone Park's Old Faithful (as opposed to the North Line's train which goes right into Glacier Park), there wld NOT be much economic benefit to Montana fm that Yellowstone side trip, or fm any of the 95% "through" passengers.

If the proposed South Line train route will provide workable service for traveling Montanans, then it will act as an economic generator within. But, IF it will only mainly serve as a conduit for 95% "through" travel to the Wet Coast, w/ bad skeds/prices/services for most Montanans, then it will NOT benefit Montana, or be used. -- Thank you.

Sincerely, Bernard E. Mues - 846-1416

NEW COMMENT

Action Item: Comment on a Project
Submitted: 10/04/2009 21:09:28
Project Commenting On: Montana_Rail_Plan
Name: Ethel MacDonald
Address Line 1: 316 West Central Avenue
City: Missoula
State/Province: MT
Postal Code: 59801
Email Address: ethelmacd@gmail.com
Phone Number: 406-549-9722

I wish to support all attempts to return passenger rail service to Missoula. I would definitely use the train if it were available. Rail travel should be subsidized, just as highways and roads are. Rail is far more efficient and current global warming and energy crises should be an impetus to getting rail travel through Missoula restored. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

NEW COMMENT

Action Item: Comment on a Project
Submitted: 10/04/2009 08:52:20
Project Commenting On: Montana_Rail_Plan
Nearest Town/City to Project: Missoula, MT
Name: Alison Mynsberge
Address Line 1: 10355 Rustic Rd.
City: Missoula
State/Province: MT
Postal Code: 59802

I strongly support passenger rail service from Missoula that connects to national routes. Both Missoula and Bozeman have large populations of students and residents whose hometowns are out-of-state. These populations are currently limited to air or highway travel to visit relatives; these populations would only be served if passenger rail service from these cities connects with national routes.

Amtrak service on the Empire Builder line is often cheaper and more convenient for long-distance travel from cities such as Libby and Whitefish to Midwestern cities with small airport hubs; the same could be true for a southern Montana line. Airline service from Missoula remains costly relative to larger hubs such as Spokane, and driving to Spokane to catch a flight is often more economical than flying directly out of Missoula.

If Amtrak had service out of Missoula, its convenience, comfort, scenery, and reliability during bad weather could make it competitive for students and others living in Montana with family or other obligations in the Midwest or in the Eastern U.S.

Please support a passenger rail line through southern Montana that connects to national Amtrak routes.

Sincerely, Alison Mynsberge

NEW COMMENT

Action Item: Comment on a Project
Submitted: 10/04/2009 10:51:27

Project Commenting On: Montana_Rail_Plan

I think it's really important to return rail traffic to the southern Montana route. As a country, we really haven't looked at rail appropriately in considering how to reduce our use of fossil fuels. Integrating the rail system at an affordable, subsidized cost would allow people from rural states like Montana to travel without driving individual cars for thousands of miles. For instance, a trip to Seattle, Portland, or Chicago from Montana would be much more energy effective on a train than in an individual car.

We considered rail travel last year when we went to Southern California. It would have been real fun to take the train, getting off enroute to visit friends and relatives. We wouldn't have had all those long hours on the highway. But, the cost was so expensive that we ended up flying and only visiting in one city.

The highways are heavily subsidized. There's nothing wrong with also subsidizing the rails. In fact, if we were to handle them comparably, the government would provide the rails. While I know that won't happen, the roads are, in fact, a huge subsidy for the auto and gasoline/diesel industries. There's nothing wrong with providing a subsidy for rail traffic, which reduces our use of fossil fuels and helps energy conservation, particularly in the vast western states.

If the cost were reasonable compared with using our vehicle, we would use the rails to go to Spokane, where we have to go often. For longer trips, reasonable rates to take our car along on the trip would make sense, so we could use the car at our destinations(s) and yet not have to drive the long miles. The alternative is renting a car at the destination, which also can be done. Our car is particularly manufactured to be safe in an accident, so often, we prefer to have that car along. Overall, rail travel just plain makes sense and is in the best interests of Montana.

NEW COMMENT

Action Item: Comment on a Project
Submitted: 10/04/2009 15:03:47
Project Commenting On: Montana_Rail_Plan
Project State Highway No.: MT
Nearest Town/City to Project:Missoula
Project Milepost: United States
Name: Wendell Beardsley
Address Line 1: 600 Colorado Gulch Rd.
City: Missoula
State/Province: MT
Postal Code: 59808
Email Address: wen-barb@earthlink.net
Phone Number: 4065490686

Dear Sirs: I write to comment on the Passenger Rail section of the Montana Rail Plan. As a past rider on the North Coast Hiawatha route between Missoula and St. Paul, I must tell you I greatly miss having east-west passenger service through Missoula. I strongly support the restoration of passenger service between Sandpoint and Williston so that the entire Amtrak system is once again connected with Montana's largest cities along the "southern route." Thank you for your consideration.

NEW COMMENT

Action Item: Comment on a Project
Submitted: 10/04/2009 19:26:21
Project Commenting On: Montana_Rail_Plan

I would like to encourage serious consideration given to the resumption of the Northern Hiawatha route from Sandpoint to Williston. Air travel between points on the route are either non-existent or prohibitively expensive. Highway travel for some is impossible; rail would be a sensible alternative.
Betsy Manore, St. Ignatius MT

NEW COMMENT

From: Lynn & Fran [mailto:lfwfew@cybernet1.com]
Sent: Sunday, October 04, 2009 3:31 PM
To: Kenny, Janet
Subject: Montana Rail Plan

I recently saw an article in the Missoulian about the draft railroad plan for Montana. I had been unaware that this study was underway until I saw this article. I am pleased that this is taking place and I and my wife are in total support of expanded rail service in this state. The southern part of this state needs and deserves rail service. If we didn't have to travel to either Whitefish, MT or Salt Lake City, UT to catch a train we would be frequent users of Amtrak. As it is now we drive our personal automobile to our daughters. One who live in Portland, OR and the other in King George, VA.

This plan is in it's draft stages but we just want to express our support and hope that train service can be implemented in the southern part of the state and specifically through Missoula soon.

Sincerely
Lynn F. Williams

NEW COMMENT

9/03/2009
Duncan Lutes
PO Box 17101
Missoula, MT 59808
406 251-8063
dclutes@gmail.com

Greetings. I would like to comment on the Montana Passenger Rail Plan that has been posted on the state's Web site. The state is to be congratulated for initiating this study. The Passenger Rail Plan provides a thoughtful examination of an alternative and efficient mode of public transportation in the state.

I propose an additional option that would likely be more successful than what is proposed in Tier 2. This option would extend the passenger service proposed in Tier 1 from Spokane to Missoula thus providing through service from Billings to connect with the Empire Builder in Spokane. This train would draw few, if any, passengers away from the Empire Builder and would serve the small towns in western Montana along highway 200 (e.g, Noxon, Thompson Falls, Plains, Paradise). These western Montana towns are much like those on the High Line with an uncontrolled access highway - arguably less safe than Hwy

2 - and none have essential air service. All of the services that the Empire Builder provides for the High Line can be said for passenger rail from Spokane to Missoula. This route may receive some financial support from Washington state as Spokane could benefit from more visitors and additional workforce associated with the new train. Also, from a logistical standpoint Spokane has existing Amtrak facilities, personnel and infrastructure to help maintain Spokane to Billings service.

Lastly, while using existing stations is preferable the service does not depend on a station at every stop. At many Amtrak stations on the High Line people wait for the train while sitting in their cars. I believe that once train service begins the individual communities will have incentive to provide some funding for stations if they see a need. Additional savings could be made by eliminating station agents, instead utilizing on board personnel to check baggage and sell tickets.

I've attached a clip of a document I've previously sent to Sen. Tester, Sen. Baucus and Gov. Schweitzer that discusses a little more of the Spokane to Billings passenger rail option.

Best Regards,
Duncan Lutes
PO Box 17101
Missoula, MT 59808
406 251-8063
dclutes@gmail.com

Attachment to e-mail...If the reinstatement of the North Coast Hiawatha should fail I request a serious study examining the feasibility of instituting passenger service from Spokane to Billings or Laurel be undertaken. The vast majority of this well maintained route is operated by Montana Rail Link - a progressive railroad with an innovative management team; one likely to view passenger traffic as a source of additional revenue, not as a hindrance to moving freight.

The Spokane to Billings route could be successful even with a limited number of stops, for example at Paradise, Missoula, Helena, Logan, Bozeman, Livingston, and Laurel/Billings (unfortunately, it appears the new station location in Sandpoint will not serve either the North Coast Hiawatha or Spokane to Billings service). While desired, no staff (or even structures) would be required at these stops. Passengers could purchase electronic tickets on the internet, from locally installed machines or onboard the train.

The Spokane to Billings route traverses the most populated parts of Montana directly serving five of the six biggest cities in the state. Only Great Falls would be further than 100 miles from a station stop on the route (figure 1). The large cities along the southern route provide plenty of lodging and good rental car availability, which will be convenient for visitors and for Montanans making intrastate trips.

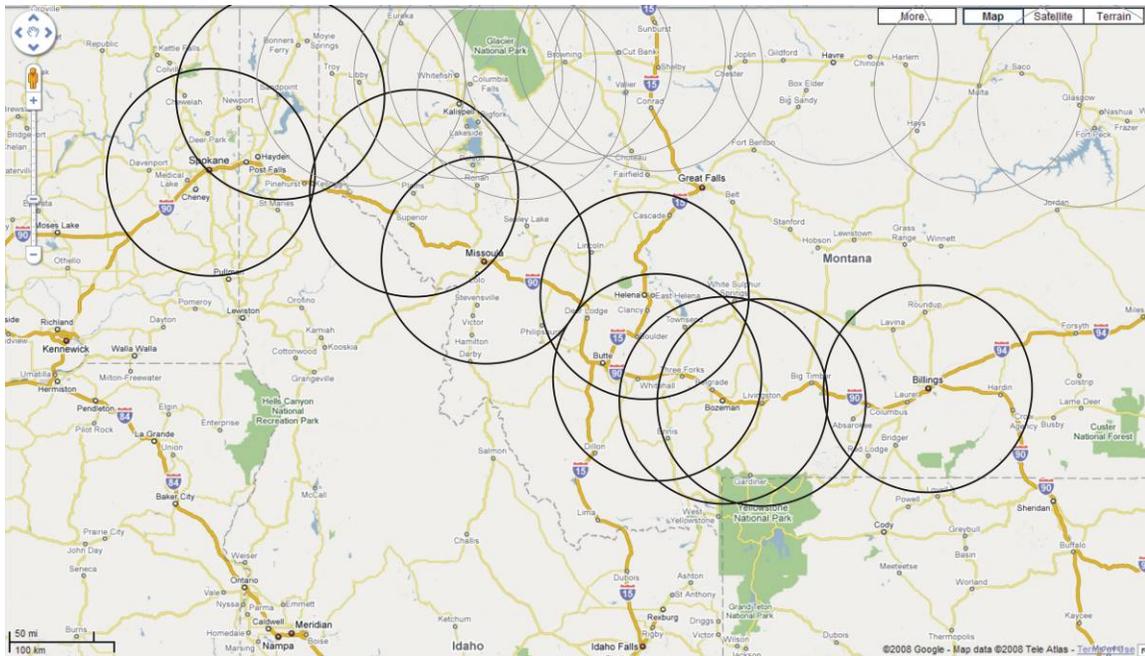


Figure 1. Black circles depict 100 mile radius around proposed stops of a Spokane to Billings passenger service. Gray circles are 100 mile radius around Empire Builder stops. Though shown, the Sandpoint stop will likely not be available because of the new station location in relation to the service route.

If scheduled to meet the Empire Builder in Spokane much of the trip through Montana would be during daylight hours both eastbound and westbound increasing ridership by locals and visitors because of its convenience (table 1).

Table 1. Proposed schedule of Spokane to Billings passenger service. Schedule allows convenient transfer to and from the Empire Builder in Spokane. If built, the new station location in Sandpoint will eliminate that stop.

Miles	East	City	West	Miles
0	04:00	Spokane, WA	24:00	642
66	05:30	Sandpoint, ID	22:35	576
178	08:15	Plains, MT	20:40	464
283	11:00	Missoula, MT	18:05	359
402	13:00	Helena, MT	15:05	240
476	14:50	Logan, MT	13:15	166
500	15:25	Bozeman, MT	12:35	142
525	16:00	Livingston, MT	12:00	117
642	19:00	Billings, MT	09:00	0

All times Mountain. Assumes 40 MPH avg. speed.

Westbound Empire Builder arrives 02:40 MT. Eastbound Empire Builder arrives 02:15 MT

With the route in place only the Big Open and southeast Montana would be more than about a hour and half drive from a passenger train route - a significant

accomplishment in a state as large as Montana. The Spokane to Billings route would likely succeed because of its proximity to large populations centers and scenic areas like Yellowstone National Park, Flathead Lake, Gates of the Mountains and the Bob Marshall Wilderness; mostly daylight schedule; favorable host railroad and connection with Amtrak's Empire Builder.

Thank you again for your support of rail passenger travel in Montana. Adding a new route would benefit Montana in a multitude of ways and I encourage you to continue to pursue reinstatement of the North Coast Hiawatha or initiate the study of Spokane - Billings service.

NEW COMMENT

Action Item: Comment on a Project
Submitted: 09/09/2009 02:22:39
Project Commenting On: Montana_Rail_Plan
Name: Darrel Armstrong
Address Line 1: 537 E.pine, #3
City: Missoula
State/Province: MT
Postal Code: 59802
Email Address: ares_home@yahoo.com

There is as usual in this kind of Montana state report a negligence in dealing with rail and other historical resources that may be impacted by redevelopment of existing lines. Inclusion of this in the initial planning makes the process go smoother as I'm sure the State Historical Society would agree. Montana state law requires professional survey and analysis of such impacts and the active involvement of the Montana State Historic Preservation Office failure to take this into account may result in later law suits or bureaucratic tangles as well as loss of significant historic and possibly prehistoric resources. Since there are an abundance of historic rail societies both within Montana and nationally and a variety of available survey and recording systems in the resource agencies, such an omission would be inexcusable, especially as camps, stations and abandoned towns along the road beds or potential new beds may hold considerable information about Chinese and other ethnic communities that built the original beds. Archaeological survey and historical records search are an essential parts of the process and required by law, why isn't this being addressed here?

NEW COMMENT - written in October 9, 2009

Ms. Holley B. Rose
512 Edith St.
Missoula, MT 59801

YES! BRING BACK THE PASSENGER TRAINS - THANK YOU

NEW COMMENT

From: Terry Whiteside [mailto:twhitesd@wtp.net]
Sent: Thursday, August 27, 2009 9:48 AM
To: Kazimi, Zia
Subject: RE: Hi Zia

You know....one thing that might be something to add to bring balance and perspective to the report is to add a section - showing Montana Agriculture rankings in production: Montana ranks #3 in Wheat production, #2 in Winter wheat production, also in barley, peas, lentils, etc.....those number are available for last year from Montana Wheat & Barley Committee in Great Falls.....but what that will show is importance of Montana agriculture in the national ag scene.

Terry Whiteside
Whiteside & Associates
3203 Third Avenue North, Suite 301
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Cell: 406-671-8153