



General Assembly
State of Colorado
Denver

March 20, 2023

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

The Honorable Tom Vilsack
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave SW
Washington, DC 2025

Dear Secretary Buttigieg and Secretary Vilsack:

As legislators who represent the areas of Western Colorado that would be impacted directly by the Uinta Basin Railway Project, we write to share our significant concerns and opposition to this project. We ask that you carefully consider this project's potential impact, including the devastating damage it could do to public health, our water resources, our environment, and our economy, when making the respective decisions charged to your departments. Further, we find the potential use of public taxpayer dollars through government approved tax-exempt private activity bonds (PABs) to finance this project to be highly objectionable, and we would strongly urge this approach to financing be rejected.

As you are aware, the Uinta Basin Railway Project would involve the shipment of heated waxy crude oil from Utah through Colorado, totaling as much as 350,000 barrels on ten, two-mile trains per day. This is immensely concerning given that the rail line runs right alongside the headwaters of the Colorado River and its tributaries, which provide water to over 40 million people in the Western United States, irrigate millions of acres of agricultural land, and drive our outdoor recreation and tourism industries, which are critical to our region's and state's economies.

In light of the recent train derailment in East Palestine, Ohio and other high-profile train accidents across the country over the years, a spill on this rail line is not only a possibility, it is likely. Such a spill would contaminate the local and regional water supply, as well as likely impact downstream consumers across the West. Given the heated nature of this transport and the widespread drought we are experiencing, this project also further increases the risk of wildfire ignition across the Western Slope. By threatening our water supply and increasing wildfire risk, this project would be truly catastrophic to our constituents, our communities, and our environment.

Our concerns with this project are grave and cannot be understated. We strongly urge you and your partners in the federal government to conduct a more thorough risk analysis in light of recent events and our pressing concerns regarding water supply and wildfire. While we understand and support the desire to increase domestic energy supply, the potential negative impacts of this project far outweigh any economic benefit. Imperiling the future of our environment and the natural resources we depend on and treasure is not a decision that should be taken lightly. Domestic energy development can and should happen through other means than this project.

A vast coalition of constituents that we represent on the Western Slope are opposed to this project, and we stand with them in this call to put a stop to this dangerous project that would jeopardize our long-term public peace, health, and safety.

Sincerely,



Speaker of the House Julie McCluskie, HD-13



Senator Dylan Roberts, SD-8



Senator Perry Will, SD-5



Representative Meghan Lukens, HD-26



Representative Elizabeth Velasco, HD-57



Representative Barbara McLachlan, HD-59

CC:

The Honorable Joe Biden President of the United States
The Honorable Michael Bennet, U.S. Senator
The Honorable John Hickenlooper, U.S. Senator
The Honorable Jared Polis, Governor of Colorado
The Honorable Joe Neguse, U.S. Congressman
The Honorable Lauren Boebert, U.S. Congresswoman
The Honorable Brittany Petterson, U.S. Congresswoman