

Congress of the United States
Washington, D.C. 20510

September 7, 2023

The Honorable Tracy Stone-Manning
Director
Bureau of Land Management
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Director Stone-Manning:

We write to share our concerns about the potential Wildcat Loadout expansion project's effects on Colorado's communities, water, land, air, and climate. The Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Utah State Office is currently evaluating this project, which would increase the facility's capacity in Price, Utah. This would enable the shipment of up to an additional one billion gallons of waxy crude oil per year from Utah's Uinta Basin through Colorado on an average of one two-mile-long train every day. These trains are proposed to run for over 100 miles alongside the Colorado River's headwaters – a vital water supply for nearly 40 million Americans, 30 Tribal nations, and millions of acres of agricultural land. Given this project's potential dangers, we urge BLM to conduct a full and robust environmental impact statement (EIS) that takes into account all the risks posed to Colorado, rather than a cursory environmental assessment (EA) of the proposed expansion.

A train derailment that spills oil in the Colorado River's headwaters would be disastrous to our state's water supplies, wildlife habitat, and outdoor recreation assets, and the broader Colorado River Basin. In addition, an accident on the train line further increases wildfire risk at a time when the West already faces historically dry conditions.

We previously have raised similar concerns regarding the proposed Uinta Basin Railway in Utah, which would ship up to 4.6 billion gallons of waxy crude oil per year through Colorado. Recently, a federal court overruled the Surface Transportation Board's (STB) approval of the project, which was based on a deeply flawed environmental and risk analysis, and ordered a new review.¹ In light of the court's decision, the BLM should not repeat the STB's mistakes, and instead conduct a robust environmental review. The BLM cannot adequately account for potential harm from increased oil shipments through Colorado with an EA, given its lower requirements for public involvement and environmental analysis.

Many Colorado communities have raised concerns about how the Wildcat Loadout expansion and the Uinta Basin Railway would increase oil train traffic and potential railway accidents that could harm water quality and wildlife, and enhance wildfire risk. Please see attached letters from Eagle County, Colorado and the city of Glenwood Springs on the Wildcat Loadout expansion

¹ Eagle County, Colo. v. Surface Transportation Board, --- F.4th --- (D.C. Cir. Aug. 18, 2023).

and from numerous Colorado local governments, organizations, and residents on the Uinta Basin Railway.

We urge BLM to prepare a full EIS that accounts for the full risks of the Wildcat Loadout expansion to Colorado's communities, water supplies, and environment.

We look forward to hearing from you on this important matter.

Sincerely,



Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator



Joe Neguse
Member of Congress