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Media Release

NEPA Process Begins on Uinta Basin Railway

Railway to bring economic stability while maintaining environmental regulations

Uinta Basin, Utah (June 19, 2019) - The U.S. Surface Transportation Board kicked-off the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process today for the Uinta Basin Railway project, sponsored by the Seven County Infrastructure Coalition (Coalition). This is one step in the process towards building a railway connecting various Uinta Basin industries to regional and national markets, which will lead to a boost in jobs and economic stability for Uinta Basin communities.

Through the NEPA process, the Surface Transportation Board and other federal agencies will evaluate potential environmental impacts and identify reasonable mitigation measures. The Coalition is working closely with the federal agency to identify the route that has the lowest cost to construct and operate, the least potential environmental impacts, and the smallest potential impact on residences, communities and irrigated farmlands.

A 45-day public comment period of the Draft Scope of Study begins today and will include six public meetings July 15-19 in Ft Duchesne, UT; Craig, CO; Price, UT; and Price, Roosevelt, and Salt Lake City, UT.

“We are committed to the public process of the Uinta Basin Railway study and look forward to working together with the Surface Transportation Board, federal and state agencies, the Ute Indian Tribe and the public to find the best solution to build this necessary railroad. We know the strong desire for economic stability and sustained quality of life in the basin and believe this railway will provide the best solution to transport goods in and out of the Uinta Basin,” said Mike McKee, executive director of the Seven County Infrastructure Coalition.

The need for additional transportation infrastructure in the Uinta Basin has been well-known for many years. Both private and public agencies have completed multiple studies showing that rail is the most economic and environmentally protective mode to transport goods in and out of the Basin.

“The Ute Indian Tribe has been engaged with the Seven Counties Infrastructure Coalition regarding the proposed Uinta Basin Railway for many months. The Ute Indian Tribe, like all of those who live in the Uinta Basin, understands the significance that a railroad would have for our community. Our isolated basin has long dealt with transportation constraints which prevent much needed economic diversification from moving forward,” stated the Ute Indian Tribe Business Committee.

Currently, those goods are shipped via long-haul trucks on two-lane highways. This can be costly and dependent on road and weather conditions. The railway will improve highway safety, decrease highway congestion and lower the public costs of highway maintenance and capacity expansion.

The Draft Scope of Study and public comments can be made on the STB website at uintabasinrailwayeis.com. Public meeting dates and locations, which will be managed by the STB, are also posted on the Coalition website at uintabasinrailway.com.

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About the Seven County Infrastructure Coalition: The Coalition was formed in 2014 in an effort to promote cooperative regional planning, increase economic opportunities, and implement sustainable infrastructure projects. Member counties include Carbon, Daggett, Duchesne, Emery, San Juan, Sevier, and Uintah. Visit SCIC-utah.org.