

The Book Cliffs Highway is moving forward

[Sage Grouse Rebel](#)

The Book Cliffs Highway, a massive proposed public subsidy to the fossil fuel industry, connecting the Seep Ridge Road (at P.R. Spring Tar Sands Mine) to I-70, has come up again. We've fought it off before, once in '92 when Grand County restructured its governance structure, and again in 2015 when the Grand County Council pulled out of the Seven County Infrastructure Coalition (SCIC) in order to avoid being outvoted over support for this project in our county. Now the SCIC is pursuing this project in Grand Country regardless of public opposition.



The SCIC's preferred route down East Canyon

NOW:

- The SCIC is in the process of submitting a Right-of-Way Application to the BLM for construction through

BLM administered lands.

- The Grand County Council has been asked to abandon County rights-of-way along the route by the SCIC. If Grand County does not abandon these rights of way, the SCIC will have to re-engineer the route.

It is very important to stop this project, which I think we can do through loud and sustained public pressure. Industry in the Book Cliffs area includes fracking for oil and gas, tar sands mining and oil shale mining. For these forms of extreme energy production to expand, they need a transportation connection to a refineries and markets. Truck traffic in the Uintah Basin to the North is at it's maximum, refineries in Salt Lake City are at capacity, and plans for a heated pipeline out of the region have been thwarted. Meanwhile, plans for a publicly funded [rail line](#) out of the Uintah Basin are also in the works. It is our job, as folks who care about this area, to get involved to stop this Tar Sands Highway from ever being completed.

[Book Cliffs Highway Fact Sheet \[2019\]](#) w/ talking points, history of opposition, and facts highlighted from the 1992 EIS done on the project.

Estimated Project Cost:*

Construction for East Canyon Route: \$157 Million

Maintenance Estimate (20 years): \$27 Million

Yearly Maintenance: \$1.35 million

* These estimates are from the [Book Cliffs Transportation Corridor Study](#), [others](#) have ranged as high as \$418 million in construction costs with annual maintenance and operating costs as high as \$3.89 million.

Other Resources:

[SCIC Feasibility Study](#)

[2014 UDOT Final Feasibility Study:](#)

[2015 Book Cliffs Transportation Corridor Study](#)

[1992 Draft EIS on the Ouray to Interstate 70 project](#)

The Seven County Infrastructure Coalition (SCIC):

The SCIC is the state entity pushing the Book Cliffs Highway (Eastern Regional Connection) and the Uinta Rail Line forward. It is a coalition of eastern Utah counties including: Carbon, Daggett, Duchesne, Emery, San Juan, Sevier, and Uintah.

The SCIC and their projects are financed almost entirely through Community Impact Board (CIB) Grants, which would otherwise be available to rural communities to help alleviate the impacts of oil and gas production. This demonstrates a shift in how CIB money is being used in the State of Utah. Rather than being available to support rural communities with fire stations, road work, water projects, and healthcare facilities, this public money is now being

granted in much larger sums to build infrastructure that benefits private corporations and promotes the development of oil, gas, tar sands, and oil shale in the state. For example, in December 2018, the SCIC agreed to grant \$27.9 million to the SCIC Uinta Rail Line in three phases. The previous maximum grant/loan combination to rural entities for public services was capped at \$5 million and rarely totaled that.

The executive director of the SCIC is Mike McKee, you may remember him as a Uintah County Commissioner. He now makes an annual salary of \$160,000 that comes directly from CIB funds.

"The coalition is unlike any other entity that comes before this board. That can't be ignored Mr. McKee. We pay your salary, we pay your administrative expenses entirely. You have no other significant sources of income. We pay your counsel, we pay everything. You're a child of the CIB board, you're a child of the state." CIB Board Member November 2018

[SCIC Website](#): lists current projects

[Upcoming Meetings](#): (every second Friday of the Month)

[Meeting Archives](#): Notes, packets

The Utah Permanent Community Impact Board (CIB):

[CIB Website](#)

[Meeting Archives](#): Upcoming meetings (usually the first Thursday of the month), Agenda, notes, packets

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