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Letter to the Editor: The Railroad

**By Dave Smith
Price**

Editor:

I have heard rumors about a new rail line being built from Duchesne to Carbon County to bring crude oil to Price. At first I just laughed. The grade is far too steep, the cost out of the realms of reality, and just who would this plan benefit? I hear talk of a tunnel at a cost of \$2 billion. Yes billion with a B.

Now in the Sun Advocate, I read the Seven County Coalition and or CIB has voted \$50 million in surplus CIB money toward plans, an environmental assessment and other matters. I hope this is just a bad dream.

Why would the Seven County Coalition and especially Carbon County support such an issue, with the end result being loss of jobs and tax base in Carbon County?

Every candidate running for county commission for many years, has expressed the need to diversify. We all understand the need for jobs not tied to the coal industry. With this movement, it appears to me, we are willing to pay dearly to kill diversification.

Do we really have \$50 million in surplus CIB monies? If we do, couldn't we think of better ways to spend those dollars?

For one thing, \$50 million would be a great start in improving the road from Duchesne to Helper. This will need to be done anyway because it would take years to see a rail line completed, I realize, we would need much more to put in a freeway, but some passing lanes and road improvements could be done without scratching two billion.

My next question is, who would this rail line benefit? If there is a single benefit for Carbon County, someone would have to inform me, as I can see none. Today, four separate businesses are loading crude from the Uintah Basin on trains. Drivers from Carbon and Emery Counties are, today, hauling that oil to Carbon County. Personnel at the four facilities are loading that oil on trains. Office personnel, truck mechanics, fuel stations, parts houses and others will directly suffer or be eliminated as jobs and business go away. We will also lose tax base as the load outs and businesses close, This is a real negative for Carbon, and yes Emery Counties. Duchesne would get some benefit as a new terminal would be built. New staff would have jobs there. However, they would also lose trucking jobs as trains hire far fewer people. Uintah County would also have a net job loss as trucking would also be reduced there. Why would they or we vote for this?

The only benefactor I see here is the oil companies, their investors and the railroad. If the line is built they could ship crude more cheaply. This would increase their profits and their owners and investors would smile all the way to the bank. Unless our citizens have shares of stock in those companies, I see little reason for us to smile here, It is time for us to speak up.

Commissioners; it is time for you to work for Carbon County on this issue. Speak up! You may have spoken at the meeting Friday, but from the article it appears, if you spoke at all, it was in support or you spoke too softly.

We need your help here.

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