

Executive Summary

Introduction

On July 30, 2001, the Six County Association of Governments,¹ Applicant, filed a Petition for Exemption with the Surface Transportation Board (Board) pursuant to 49 United States Code (U.S.C.) 10502 for authority to construct and operate 43 miles of new single-track rail line in Sanpete, Sevier, and Juab Counties, Utah, that would connect the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) about 16 miles south of Nephi, near Juab,² Utah, to a proposed coal transfer terminal facility about 0.5 mile southwest of Salina, Utah, (see Figure ES-1, General Project Overview). The Proposed Action is known as the Central Utah Rail Project (CURP).

A portion of the rail line is proposed to cross segments of public lands administered by the U.S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Therefore, on February 14, 2005, the Applicant filed a right-of-way application with BLM pursuant to Section 501(a)(6) of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of October 21, 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1761).

This Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Draft EIS) was prepared by the Board's Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) in cooperation with the BLM. Under the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), the Board is the lead agency for preparing the Draft EIS, and BLM is a cooperating agency. This Draft EIS has been prepared in compliance with NEPA, the Board's regulations for implementing NEPA (49 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 1105), the guidance provided by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations implementing the procedural provisions of NEPA (40 CFR 1500), *Regulations for Implementing NEPA* and BLM policy procedures and guidance documents.

The Board's and BLM's actions considered in the Draft EIS are administrative and involve decisions by both agencies. The Board, pursuant to 49 United States Code (U.S.C.) 10901, is the agency responsible for granting authority for the construction and operation of new rail line facilities. The BLM action is either to grant or deny a right-of-way grant across public land in the project area to construct, operate, maintain, and terminate relevant segments of the

¹ Six County Association of Governments is a voluntary association of local governments of Sevier, Juab, Sanpete, Millard, Piute, and Wayne Counties in Utah. Its general purpose is to act as an "umbrella-type" organization to plan and develop programs with respect to various economic activities including, but not limited to, owning, acquiring, constructing, operating, and financing transportation facilities.

² The geographic location known as Juab, Utah, was established in 1860 near Chicken Creek Reservoir. In 1879, when the railroad extended its line to Milford, Juab gradually declined in population. Today it is farmland. The word "Juab" comes from the name given to the valley by the Paiute Indian Tribe, meaning "flat or level plain." Juab is identified on state road maps and by the U.S. Geological Survey. It is located about 16 miles south of Nephi, just off of I-15, near the UPRR line and Chicken Creek Reservoir at 39.51792 N 111.94216 W.

proposed rail line. This public land is located within Sevier County and Sanpete County, Utah, which are under the management jurisdiction of BLM's Richfield Field Office.

With this Draft EIS, SEA and BLM seek to inform Federal, state, and local agencies, elected officials, Federally recognized tribes, affected local communities, and the general public about the expected environmental effects of the Proposed Action and Alternatives. This Draft EIS describes the Proposed Action; identifies reasonable alternatives, including the No-Action Alternative; describes the affected environment; evaluates and compares the environmental effects of the Proposed Action and Alternatives; and identifies mitigation measures that could eliminate or lessen the expected environmental impacts.

In conducting its environmental analysis, SEA has considered a wide variety of interests and issues. To address the strong public interest in this proposed project, SEA has conducted technical analyses and studies, consultations, and site visits and gathered and analyzed extensive environmental data in greater depth than it typically would for a project with low train traffic and moderate impacts.

After the close of the public comment period on the Draft EIS, a Final Environmental Impact Statement (Final EIS) will be prepared in response to comments on the Draft EIS. The Board then will issue a final decision, based on the entire environmental record, including the Draft EIS, the Final EIS, and all public and agency comments received, determining whether to give final approval to the project and, if so, appropriate environmental mitigation. The Draft EIS will also serve as the NEPA document for BLM's determinations with respect to the right-of-way across public lands. After the BLM issues the associated EIS Record of Decision, and if the decision approves the proposed project across the described public land, construction would not begin until Title V right-of-way grant UTU-80737 along with its terms and conditions and a Notice to Proceed are issued. The Applicant would not be able to begin construction of the new rail line until the Board and the BLM issue final decisions and both decisions have become effective.

Purpose and Need for Action

The purpose of this project is to provide access to local industries, primarily a coal mine owned by the Southern Utah Fuel Company (SUFCO) located 30 miles east of Salina. Due to an absence of rail access these industries currently move all goods by truck. Other than Juab's access to the nearby UPRR line, no rail service exists in this part of Utah. Businesses in the counties of Sanpete and Sevier must now rely exclusively on trucking for freight transportation. The proposed rail line would allow industries to access rail transportation for bulk commodities to and from the area. Rail would also allow for the reduction of heavy truck traffic on state highways and city streets not designed for heavy truck loads.

Project Context

Due to the lack of a rail connection to the UPRR line near Juab, SUFCO currently transports its mined coal by truck about 83 miles from Salina along various roads and highways. These trucks each carry about 43 tons of coal and travel through downtown Salina at the rate of about one truck per minute. The Applicant says that this traffic causes severe congestion in Salina and significant wear and tear on area roads. It expects that rail access to the UPRR line near Juab would ease this congestion, extend the life of Salina's roads, and reduce air pollution. The Applicant also anticipates that the addition of a rail line would attract business and industry to the area, thereby increasing employment.

The Applicant states that, although it seeks authorization to construct and operate the proposed line and, therefore, would become a common carrier, it does not plan to own or operate this line for profit. The Applicant expects to work jointly with another entity in constructing the line and possibly assign its responsibility for common-carrier operations to an experienced but not yet identified operator.

Scoping and Public Involvement

SEA has undertaken extensive public outreach activities to give interested parties, agencies, Federally recognized tribes, elected officials, and the general public opportunities to comment and actively participate in the environmental review process.

To help determine the scope of the EIS, and as required by the Board's regulations as found in 49 CFR 1105.10(a), SEA published the Notice of Intent to Prepare an EIS in the *Federal Register* on September 30, 2003, and made it available to the public. On October 22 and 23, 2003, SEA held public scoping meetings in Salina and Gunnison, Utah, as part of the EIS scoping process as discussed in the Notice of Scoping Meetings and Request for Comments published by the Board on October 20, 2003.

Based on input received during the scoping process, SEA developed a Draft Scope of Analysis for the EIS. On December 24, 2003, SEA published the Notice of Availability of Draft Scope of Analysis for the EIS and Request for Comments in the *Federal Register* and made it available to the public. The scoping comment period concluded on January 26, 2004. After reviewing and considering all comments received, SEA published the Final Scope of Analysis for the EIS. SEA consulted with and will continue to consult with Federal, state, and local agencies, tribes, affected communities, and all interested parties to gather and disseminate information about the Proposed Action.

During the scoping comment period, SEA invited BLM to participate as a cooperating agency in the preparation of the EIS because the Proposed Action could affect lands administered by BLM. In a letter to the Board dated January 21, 2004, BLM accepted SEA's invitation to participate as a cooperating agency on this Proposed Action.

In November 2003, SEA developed a Tribal Consultation Plan that included a list of Federally recognized tribes that should be included in SEA's environmental review process. As part of the scoping process, in April 2003, SEA contacted the tribes that had been identified in the Plan, including the Ute Indian Tribe, the Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah, the Goshute Indian Tribe, the Skull Valley Band of Goshute Indians, and the Hopi Tribe (see Appendix C, Tribal Consultation Plan). Members of these tribes were subsequently invited to attend scoping meetings and a site visit to the project area on May 20, 2003. During scoping meetings, the Navajo Nation expressed interest in being included in SEA's consultations and was thus identified as an additional Federally recognized tribe that should be included in the NEPA consultation process.

In 2006, SEA identified other Federally tribes as potentially having an interest in the project area. These include the Southern Ute Tribe of Colorado, the Ute Mountain Ute of Colorado, the White Mesa Ute, the San Juan Southern Paiute of Arizona, the Kaibab Paiute Tribe of Arizona, and the Moapa Band of Paiute Indians of Nevada. SEA provided letters of invitation to these additional tribes to request their involvement in its environmental review of the project.

Alternatives Considered in SEA's Environmental Review

The alternatives considered include the No-Action Alternative, Alternative A; the Proposed Action, Alternative B; and one other alternative, Alternative C.

Alternative A (No-Action Alternative)

CEQ's regulations implementing NEPA (40 CFR 1502.14(d)) require consideration of a No-Action Alternative. The No-Action Alternative provides a basis for comparing the other project alternatives.

For the No-Action Alternative, no new rail line or terminal facilities would be constructed. No new train operations through Juab, Sevier, or Sanpete Counties would be conducted, and rail operations on the UPRR line would not change. Coal-haul trucks would continue to use highways in the project area to transport coal from SUFCO to the existing UPRR mainline south of Nephi near Juab.

Alternative B (Proposed Action – Applicant's Preferred Alternative)

The Proposed Action would involve construction of a new rail line between the UPRR mainline near Juab and a loading facility near the industrial park in Salina. The connection with the UPRR would be a wye (a Y-shaped intersection) between the Juab and Sharp sidings as shown in Figure 2-1, Alternatives, in Chapter 2. Sidings would be located within the project right-of-way; however, specific locations are not yet determined.

The project is proposed to be located within portions of Juab, Sanpete, and Sevier Counties. The general alignment of the Proposed Action would run in a north-south direction. The Proposed Action alignment would pass near the Sevier Bridge Reservoir through portions of Juab County and continue south through a valley east of the Pahvant Range and the Valley Mountains and west of the San Pitch Mountains (also called the Gunnison Plateau).

More specifically, at the northern end of the project, the Proposed Action alignment would cross Sevier Bridge Reservoir at Yuba Narrows, south of Yuba Lake Recreation Area, where the reservoir narrows. This crossing would be adjacent to the point where a high-voltage transmission line currently crosses the reservoir. The Proposed Action continues southward along the western edge of a marshy area south of the reservoir. South of the reservoir, the Proposed Action continues along the western edge of the agricultural areas in portions of Sevier County roughly parallel to but east of the existing high-voltage transmission line. It gradually veers to the south-southeast and then south toward the Sanpete County–Sevier County border and eventually to Salina, where the alternative terminates. Between the Sevier County border and Salina, the Proposed Action would cross primarily agricultural land about a mile west of Redmond and then cross U.S. Highway 50 (US 50) near its crossing of the Sevier River west of Salina. The alignment terminates at the proposed loading facility north of I-70 near Salina's industrial park.

The Proposed Action would consist of a single track, except at the northern interchange yard south of Nephi near Juab (connection with the existing UPRR) and the load-out facility in Salina. The Applicant expects one round trip (two movements which equals one full load and one empty back-haul) per day. About 100 to 110 cars would be involved in each round trip. Most of the shipments would consist of coal transported in coal cars. The rail line would be designed to allow trains to travel 49 mph (miles per hour). In addition to coal shipments, SCAOG anticipates shipping smaller quantities of petroleum products, lumber products, nonmetallic, minerals, wallboard and plaster. This is the design speed that is required under the Federal Rail Administration requirements for freight train movements in non-signalized areas.

Alternative C

Alternative C is an alternative suggested by citizens who attended the public scoping meetings. This alternative was suggested because it minimizes the visual impacts of the rail line and would disturb fewer parcels of farmland within the project area. This alternative would follow the same alignment as the Proposed Action until a point about 4.5 miles north of the Sanpete County–Sevier County border. At this point, Alternative C would run south on the west side of the Piute Canal, about 0.5 mile to 1.0 mile west of the Proposed Action but east of the existing high-voltage transmission line. Alternative C would continue south essentially parallel to but west of the Proposed Action and west of the Piute Canal across the Sanpete County–Sevier County border. Alternative C would then rejoin the Proposed Action

about 0.5 mile north of the point where the Proposed Action crosses US 50 about 3 miles west of Salina (see Figure 2-1, Alternatives).

Because Alternative C remains west of the Piute Canal, it also remains at a higher elevation on the foothills than does Alternative B toward the south end of Sanpete County. The elevational difference from the foothills where Alternative C crosses US 50 to the load-out facility is much greater than the elevational difference for Alternative B through that same latitude of the project. Therefore, from US 50 to the southern terminus, Alternative C requires a steep grade that cannot be safely navigated by a fully loaded train. To reduce the grade so that a loaded train can gain the elevation from the load-out facility to the point at which it crosses US 50, a berm with a maximum height of 75 feet and a maximum width of 550 feet would be needed. This berm would provide a platform on which to build a rail line that gradually reduces elevation to create a safe and operational approach to the load-out facility at the southern terminus.

Alternatives Eliminated from Detailed Study

Seven alternatives were eliminated from detailed analysis in the Draft EIS because they were deemed unreasonable or infeasible. Figure 2-5, Applicant Alignments, depicts all alignments considered for the project. Alignments included on this figure, but eliminated from further analysis, include Alignments N1 and N2 (northern alignments) and Alignments S1, S2, S3, S4, and S5 (southern alignments).

In accordance with the CEQ regulations at 40 CFR 1502.14(a), SEA discusses in this Draft EIS the reasons why some alignments are not considered in detail. SEA eliminated Alignment N1 because it would have the greatest impacts on residences and streams (Chriss Creek). Most importantly, Alignment N1 would require a grade-separated crossing at I-15. Due to the construction and operational concerns and the expected environmental impacts of the grade-separated crossing, Alignment N1 was eliminated from detailed analysis in the environmental process.

Of the southern alignments considered, some alignments would remove a greater amount of wetlands than those alignments carried forward (50 acres removed for S2, 52 acres for S3, and 28 acres for S4). Due to their high environmental impacts to wetlands and farmlands and the habitat fragmentation and associated mitigation costs compared to the other southern alignments, Alignments S2, S3, and S4 were eliminated from detailed analysis in the environmental process.

SEA also considered alternatives that were combinations of N2/S1 and N2/S5. N2/S1 was removed during the project scoping phase because it was similar to the Alternative C proposed by the public, which is more sensitive to the aesthetic resources and disturbs fewer parcels of farmland (see Figure 2-5, Applicant Alignments).

Overview of the Affected Environment

The location of the proposed project is within Juab, Sevier, and Sanpete Counties. The area is generally broad, flat or rolling terrain divided by the Sevier River which runs south to north and is detained in the north end of the project area by the Sevier Bridge Reservoir before continuing north and west out of the project area. A large portion of the project area supports farms that rely on an irrigation system composed of an extensive canal and ditch network. The topography of the project area requires that the railroad be placed within the valley of surrounding mountains and oriented generally parallel to the river.

Summary of Environmental Impacts

SEA conducted an in-depth review of the Applicant's proposal, which included independent environmental analysis of the expected project impacts and evaluation of the issues raised by government agencies and the public. For detailed information about the environmental impacts of the alternatives, see Chapter 4, Environmental Consequences.

For much of the length of the project, Alternative B and Alternative C would occupy the same corridor. Therefore, many impacts from the proposed alternatives would be the same. However, in order to allow a loaded train to gain the elevation from the coal-loading facility toward the Alternative C alignment, a berm with maximum height of 75 feet and maximum width of 550 feet along the southernmost 2.5 miles of the rail line is required. The construction of Alternative C would result in greater impacts to farmland, biological resources, and water resources than would Alternative B.

No construction or maintenance activities would be required for the No-Action Alternative, so there would be no impacts from the No-Action Alternative to the resources discussed below.

Rail Operations and Safety. Impacts to traffic delay and delay from grade crossings would be negligible under Alternatives B and C. Alternatives B and C would sharply reduce the number of trucks carrying coal on State Route 28 (SR 28) and U.S. Highway 89 (US 89) between Salina and Juab, which would increase traffic safety. The standards of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) would be applied where necessary.

Land Use. Alternative B would result in the loss of 43.06 acres of irrigated farmland, 8.92 acres of non-irrigated farmland, and 4.23 AUMs (animal unit month; the amount of forage required to sustain one cow for one month). Due to necessary berm construction, Alternative C would result in the loss of 121.53 acres irrigated farmland, 8.92 acres of non-irrigated farmland, and 4.69 AUMs. Alternatives B and C would be compatible with state and BLM land use plans and policies as discussed in Section 3.2.5, Federal Land Use (Bureau of Land Management), and Section 3.7, Hazardous Materials and Waste Sites, of this EIS. Both

alternatives would require a change in GMRF-1 (Grazing, Mining, Recreation, and Forestry) zoning in Juab County to allow the railroad.

Biological Resources. Alternative B would result in the loss of 538 acres of mixed-vegetation communities. Wildlife would be temporarily displaced during construction and periodic maintenance. Alternative B could affect long-billed curlew habitat in the Redmond Wildlife Management Area (WMA). In addition, Alternative B would result in the loss of 10.8 acres of wildlife habitat in Yuba Lake Recreation Area and 4.3 acres of wildlife habitat in Redmond WMA.

Alternative C would result in the loss of 660 acres of mixed-vegetation communities. Wildlife would be temporarily displaced during construction and periodic maintenance. Alternative C would result in the loss of the same 10.8 acres of wildlife habitat in Yuba Lake Recreation Area as with Alternative B, but Alternative C would not affect Redmond WMA. There would be no impacts to long-billed curlew habitat in Redmond WMA under Alternative C.

Water Resources. Alternative B would disturb 163.5 acres of wetland, 15.96 acres of floodplain area, and 173.93 acres of groundwater recharge area and would cross 85 ephemeral drainages. Alternative C would disturb 163.0 acres of wetland, 18.13 acres of floodplain area, and 259.11 acres of groundwater recharge area and would cross 109 ephemeral drainages.

Topography, Geology, and Soils. There would be no impact from Alternatives B and C to geological conditions. Alternative B would require 1,286,000 cubic yards of borrow material. Alternative B would have direct impacts to 12.1 acres of prime farmland and direct impacts to 3.1 acres of state important farmland.

Impacts from Alternative C would be similar to those from Alternative B except that construction of a berm with a maximum height of 75 feet and a maximum width of 550 feet would require 12,518,000 cubic yards of borrow material. Alternative C would have direct impacts to 19.99 acres of prime farmland, indirect impacts to 2.7 acres of prime farmland, and direct impacts to 3.06 acres of state important farmland.

Energy Resources. Alternatives B and C provide a more cost-efficient method of transporting mining commodities than truck. The rail line would decrease energy use from 2,832 million Btu (British thermal units) per day for truck shipping to 1,301 million Btu per day for truck and rail shipping. There would be no effect on energy distribution.

Socioeconomics. Impacts to socioeconomics from Alternatives B and C would be the same. These impacts include a small increase in the population of Sanpete and Sevier Counties from increased economic development. About 108 trucking jobs would be lost, but job loss in Sanpete and Sevier Counties would be offset by the potential for new jobs from the rail line, economic development trends, and technological advances (see Section 4.11.3, Impacts to Employment and Income). For example, employment in the stone, clay, and glass sector

would be helped by continuing demand for ballast for the railroad after construction; an estimated \$30,000 to \$60,000 of ballast would be purchased annually over the following 20 years. The sales tax base would increase by 0.05% to 0.2% over 2002 levels annually, and the property tax base loss would be less than 0.1% per county. There would be no significant effect to the agricultural industry, emergency response times, or environmental justice communities.

Cultural and Historic Properties and Paleontological Resources. Alternative B would affect 27 prehistoric sites, 16 historic sites, and two multi-component sites. Alternative C would affect 12 prehistoric sites and 18 historic sites. Both Alternatives B and C would affect cultural properties, but neither would affect any paleontological resources.

Recreation. Alternative B would cause a loss of about 0.02% of BLM-administered land in the study area. A wait time of about 3 minutes 12 seconds per train at the rail crossing of the Paiute all-terrain vehicle (ATV) trail would not have a significant effect on trail use. Alternative B would affect about 11 acres of Yuba Lake Recreation Area and the Sevier Bridge Reservoir and would cause short-term impacts to recreation activities at Yuba Narrows during bridge construction. The crossing of the dirt access road about 0.5 mile from the main entrance of the Painted Rocks Campground would not significantly affect recreation activities.

Impacts from Alternative C would be similar to those from Alternative B except that there would be a loss of about 0.06% of BLM-administered land in the study area. In addition, construction of the berm would cut off a loop of 1,570 linear feet of the Paiute ATV trail.

Aesthetics. Visual impacts under Alternatives B and C would be greatest during short-term construction activities. The rail line would have moderate long-term impacts including cut-and-fill slopes, three bridges, loss of agricultural land and other vegetation, and drainage structures. Because the rail line would not be in constant use, users would not likely have a high visual sensitivity to the tracks. Impacts from Alternative C would be greater in the southernmost 2.5 miles of the study area due to the 75-foot-tall berm.

Vibration, Noise, Air Quality, and Hazardous Materials. There would be no impacts from Alternatives B and C on vibration, noise thresholds, air quality, or hazardous materials.

SEA preliminarily concludes, based on information available to date, that the environmental distinctions between the proposed alternatives are currently not sufficient enough to designate one environmentally preferable alternative. SEA specifically requests comments on this issue from all interested parties and the public. See Table ES-1 below, Comparison of the Environmental Impacts of the Alternatives.

Table ES-1. Comparison of the Environmental Impacts of the Alternatives

Resource Category	Alternative A (No-Action Alternative)	Alternative B (Proposed Action)	Alternative C
<i>Rail Operations and Safety</i>			
Traffic Delay	No effect.	No effect.	Same as Alternative B.
Traffic Safety	No effect.	Sharply reduce number of trucks carrying coal on SR 28 and US 89 between Salina and Levan. Increase traffic safety; no increase in delay from grade crossings.	Same as Alternative B.
Rail Lines	No effect.	Construct 43 miles of new single-track rail line between Juab and Salina. Applicant would operate one round trip (two movements which equals one full load and one empty back-haul) per day.	Same as Alternative B.
Trucking Operations	No effect.	Loss of 108 jobs in the local trucking industry.	Same as Alternative B.
Rail Accidents	No effect.	About one accident every 3 years.	Same as Alternative B.
Grade Crossing Safety		About one at-grade accident per year.	Same as Alternative B.
<i>Land Use</i>			
Land Use and Zoning	No effect.	Change in GMRF-1 zoning in Juab County would be necessary to allow the railroad. Proposed Action is compatible with state and BLM land use.	Same as Alternative B.
Farmland and Grazing Allotments	No effect.	Loss of 43.06 acres of irrigated farmland and 8.92 acres of non-irrigated farmland. Loss of 4.23 AUMs.	Affects fewer parcels of farmland, but results in loss of 121.53 acres of irrigated farmland and 8.92 acres of non-irrigated farmland. Loss of 4.69 AUMs.
<i>Biological Resources</i>			
Vegetation	No effect.	Loss of 538 acres of mixed-vegetation communities.	Loss of 660 acres of mixed-vegetation communities.
Wildlife and Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Species	No effect.	Wildlife would be temporarily displaced during construction and periodic maintenance. Potential for impact to long-billed curlew habitat in Redmond WMA.	Wildlife impacts would be same as those from Alternative B, except for no potential for impact to long-billed curlew habitat.
Wildlife Sanctuaries, Refuges, and State Parks	No effect.	Loss of 10.8 acres in Yuba Lake Recreation Area and 4.3 acres of wildlife habitat in Redmond WMA.	Loss of 10.8 acres in Yuba Lake Recreation Area. No impact to Redmond WMA.

Resource Category	Alternative A (No-Action Alternative)	Alternative B (Proposed Action)	Alternative C
<i>Water Resources</i>			
Surface Water	No effect.	Loss of 163.5 acres of wetland and crossing of 85 ephemeral drainages.	Loss of 163.0 acres of wetland and crossing of 109 ephemeral drainages.
Floodplains	No effect.	Disturbance to 15.96 acres of floodplain area.	Disturbance to 18.13 acres of floodplain area.
Groundwater	No effect.	Disturbance to 173.93 acres of groundwater recharge area.	Disturbance to 259.11 acres of groundwater recharge area.
<i>Topography, Geology, and Soils</i>			
Topography	No effect.	Requires 1,286,000 cubic yards of borrow material. Minor effect from fill of about 3 to 5 feet in varying places along rail line. Grade separations of maximum 25 feet over existing roadways and water crossings.	Construction of berm with maximum height of 75 feet and maximum width of 550 feet. Requires 12,518,000 cubic yards of borrow material.
Geologic Impacts	No effect.	No adverse effect to existing geologic conditions or increase in potential for occurrence of geologic hazards.	Same as Alternative B.
Soil Impacts	No effect.	Short-term impact to soil during construction. No long-term impact due to relatively flat topography.	Short-term impacts to soil during construction. Long-term potential for erosion on berm.
Prime Farmland	No effect.	Direct impacts to 12.1 acres of prime farmland. No indirect impacts.	Direct impacts to 19.99 acres and indirect impacts to 2.7 acres of prime farmland.
Farmland of State Importance	No effect.	Direct impacts to 3.1 acres of state important farmland.	Direct impacts to 3.06 acres of state important farmland.
Minerals and Mining	No effect.	Provide more cost-efficient method of transporting mining commodities.	Same as Alternative B.
Vibration	No effect.	No effect.	Same as Alternative B.
Hazardous Materials	No effect.	No effect.	Same as Alternative B.
Air Quality	No effect.	No effect.	Same as Alternative B.
Noise Impacts	No effect.	No noise thresholds would be exceeded. Slight increase in noise at residences and campgrounds.	Same as Alternative B.

Resource Category	Alternative A (No-Action Alternative)	Alternative B (Proposed Action)	Alternative C
Energy Resources	No effect.	Rail line would decrease energy use from 2,832 million Btu per day for truck shipping to 1,301 million Btu per day for truck and rail shipping. This would improve efficiency of coal transport in support of the National Energy Policy Act of 2005 (Public Law 109-58). There would be no effect on energy distribution, grade crossing delay, or safety.	Same as Alternative B.
Socioeconomics			
Population and Demographics	No effect.	Increased economic development could cause a small increase in population of Sanpete and Sevier Counties.	Same as Alternative B.
Employment and Income	No effect.	About 108 trucking jobs would be lost. However, the rail line would contribute 328 net new jobs from various industries.	Same as Alternative B.
Agricultural Industry	No effect.	No significant impacts to the agricultural industry.	Same as Alternative B.
Sales Tax Base	No effect.	Sales tax base would increase by 0.05% to 0.2% over 2002 levels annually.	Same as Alternative B.
Property Tax Base	No effect.	Property tax base loss would be less than 0.1% per county.	Same as Alternative B.
Community Facilities	No effect.	An initial spike in demand for services and facilities would occur with the construction phase of the project and then decline.	Same as Alternative B.
Emergency Response	No effect.	No significant effect to existing emergency response times in the study area.	Same as Alternative B.
Environmental Justice Communities	No effect.	No significant effect.	Same as Alternative B.

Resource Category	Alternative A (No-Action Alternative)	Alternative B (Proposed Action)	Alternative C
<i>Cultural and Historic Properties and Paleontological Resources</i>			
Cultural Resources	No effect.	Potential for significant impacts to cultural properties.	Same as Alternative B.
Historic Properties	No effect.	Potential for impacts to 27 prehistoric sites, 16 historic sites, and two multi-component sites.	Potential for impacts to 12 prehistoric sites and 18 historic sites.
Paleontological Resources	No effect.	No effect.	Same as Alternative B.
<i>Recreation</i>			
BLM-Administered Land	No effect.	Loss of about 0.02% of BLM-administered land in the study area would not have a significant impact on recreation.	Loss of about 0.06% of BLM-administered land in the study area would not have a significant impact on recreation.
Paiute All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV) Trail System	No effect.	Wait time of about 3 minutes 12 seconds per day would not have a significant impact on trail use.	Construction of berm would cut off a loop of 1,570 linear feet of the Paiute ATV trail.
Chicken Creek Reservoir	No effect.	No effect.	Same as Alternative B.
Yuba Lake Recreation Area and Sevier Bridge Reservoir	No effect.	Loss of about 11 acres would not significantly affect recreation activities.	Same as Alternative B.
Painted Rocks Campground	No effect.	Crossing of dirt access road about 200 yards from main entrance would not significantly affect recreation activities.	Same as Alternative B.
Yuba Narrows		Short-term impact to recreation activities during bridge construction. No long-term impact to boat use or other recreation activities.	Same as Alternative B.
Sevier River	No effect.	No effect.	Same as Alternative B.
Redmond Lake	No effect.	No effect.	Same as Alternative B.

Resource Category	Alternative A (No-Action Alternative)	Alternative B (Proposed Action)	Alternative C
<i>Aesthetics</i>			
Visual Characteristics	No effect.	Impacts would be greatest during short-term construction activities. Moderate long-term impact would remain from rail line including cut-and-fill slopes, three bridges, loss of agricultural land and other vegetation, and drainage structures.	Impacts would be similar to those from Alternative B. However, impacts would be greater in the southernmost 2.5 miles of the study area due to the 75-foot-tall berm. There would be fewer visual impacts on canal/irrigation crossing structures but more disturbance to agricultural land.
User Groups	No effect.	Because the rail line would not be in constant use, users would not likely have a high visual sensitivity to the tracks.	Same as Alternative B.
Wild and Scenic Rivers	No effect. There are no potentially eligible wild, scenic, or recreational river segments in the study area.	Same as Alternative A.	Same as Alternative A.

Cumulative Impacts

SEA evaluated planned or reasonably foreseeable projects that would take place in the same area as the proposed rail line. These projects include a proposed upgrade to Quitchupah Creek Road and proposed construction of the Nevco Energy Company Power Plant. Although these two projects are planned to occur in the same general geographic region as the Proposed Action and Alternatives, the projects are separated from the Proposed Action and Alternatives by a distance of 25 miles for Quitchupah Creek Road and 8 miles for the Nevco Energy Plant (see Figure ES-1, General Project Overview). The mountainous topography of the project area also separates these projects from the proposed Central Utah Rail project (see Figure ES-1). Therefore, the projects do not share the same geographical impact area for most resources considered in this EIS. See Chapter 5, Cumulative Impacts, for further information.

Summary of SEA's Preliminary Recommended Mitigation

Based on the information available to date, consultations with appropriate agencies, and extensive environmental analysis, SEA considered preliminary mitigation measures to address the expected environmental impacts of construction and operation of the proposed rail line. These preliminary mitigation measures are presented in Chapter 6, Mitigation. BLM developed mitigation measures designed to protect public lands. The BLM right-of-way grant UTU-80737 would be issued subject to regulations under 43 CFR 2800 and mitigating stipulations that are needed to ensure mitigation of associated surface disturbance activities.

SEA emphasizes that the recommended environmental mitigation measures in the Draft EIS are preliminary, and it invites public and agency comments on these proposed environmental mitigation measures. In order for SEA to assess the comments effectively, it is critical that the public be specific regarding any desired mitigation and the reasons why the suggested mitigation would be appropriate.

SEA will make its final recommendations on environmental mitigation to the Board in the Final EIS after considering all comments on the Draft EIS from Federal and state agencies, interested parties, and the public. The Board will then make a final decision regarding this project and any environmental conditions it might impose.

Request for Comments on the Draft EIS

The public and any interested parties are encouraged to submit written comments on all aspects of this Draft EIS. SEA will consider all comments in preparing the Final EIS, which will include responses to all substantive comments, SEA's final conclusions on expected impacts, and SEA's final recommendations. All comments must be submitted with the comment period, which will close August 22, 2007. When submitting comments on the Draft EIS, please be as specific as possible and substantiate your concerns and recommendations. Please mail written comments to:

Surface Transportation Board
Case Control Unit
395 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20423-0001

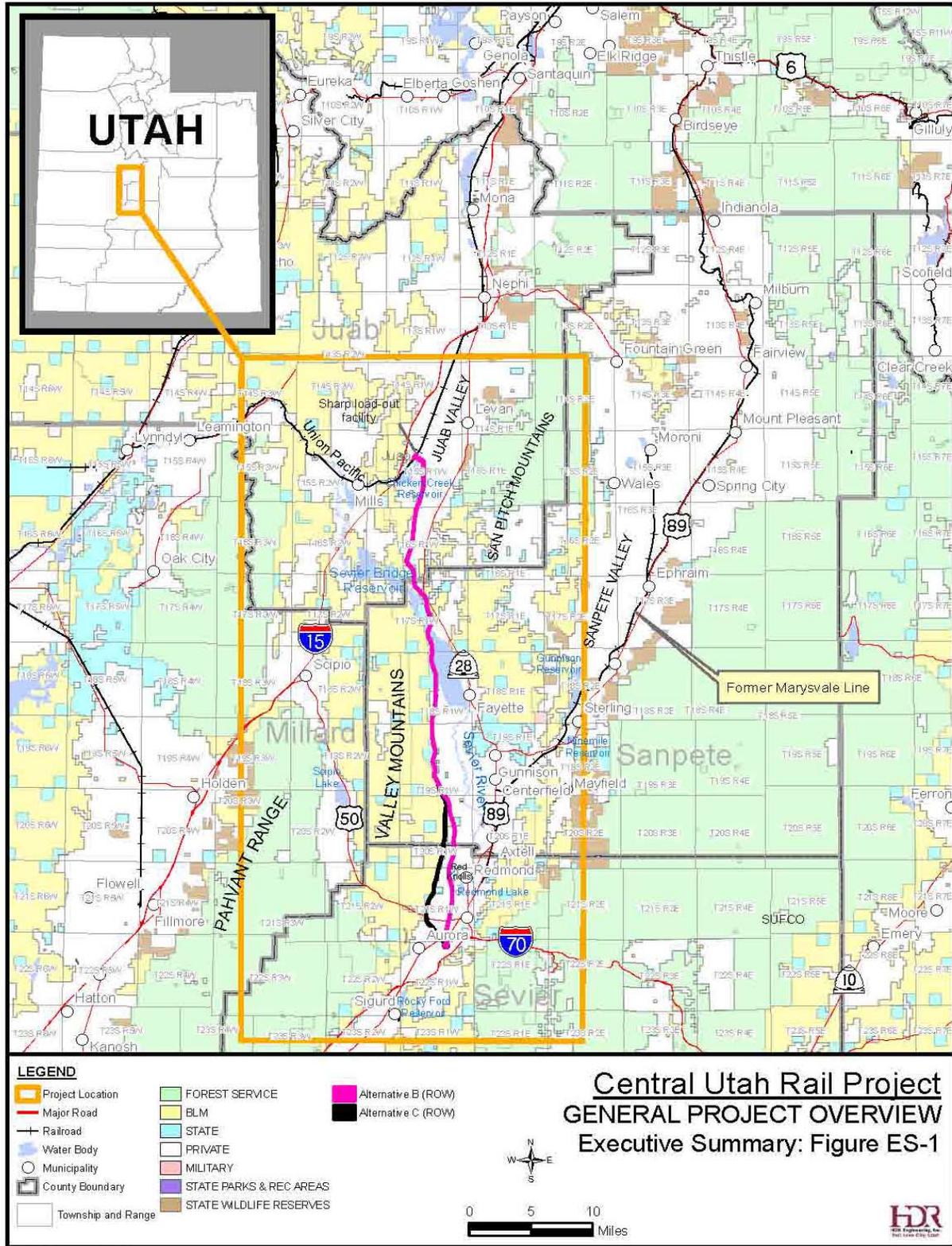
To ensure proper handing of your comments, please mark your submission:

Attention: Phillis Johnson-Ball
Section of Environmental Analysis
Environmental Filing FD No. 34075

Environmental comments can also be filed electronically on the Board's website, www.stb.dot.gov, by clicking on the "E-FILING" link. **Please refer to Docket No. FD 34075 in all correspondence.**

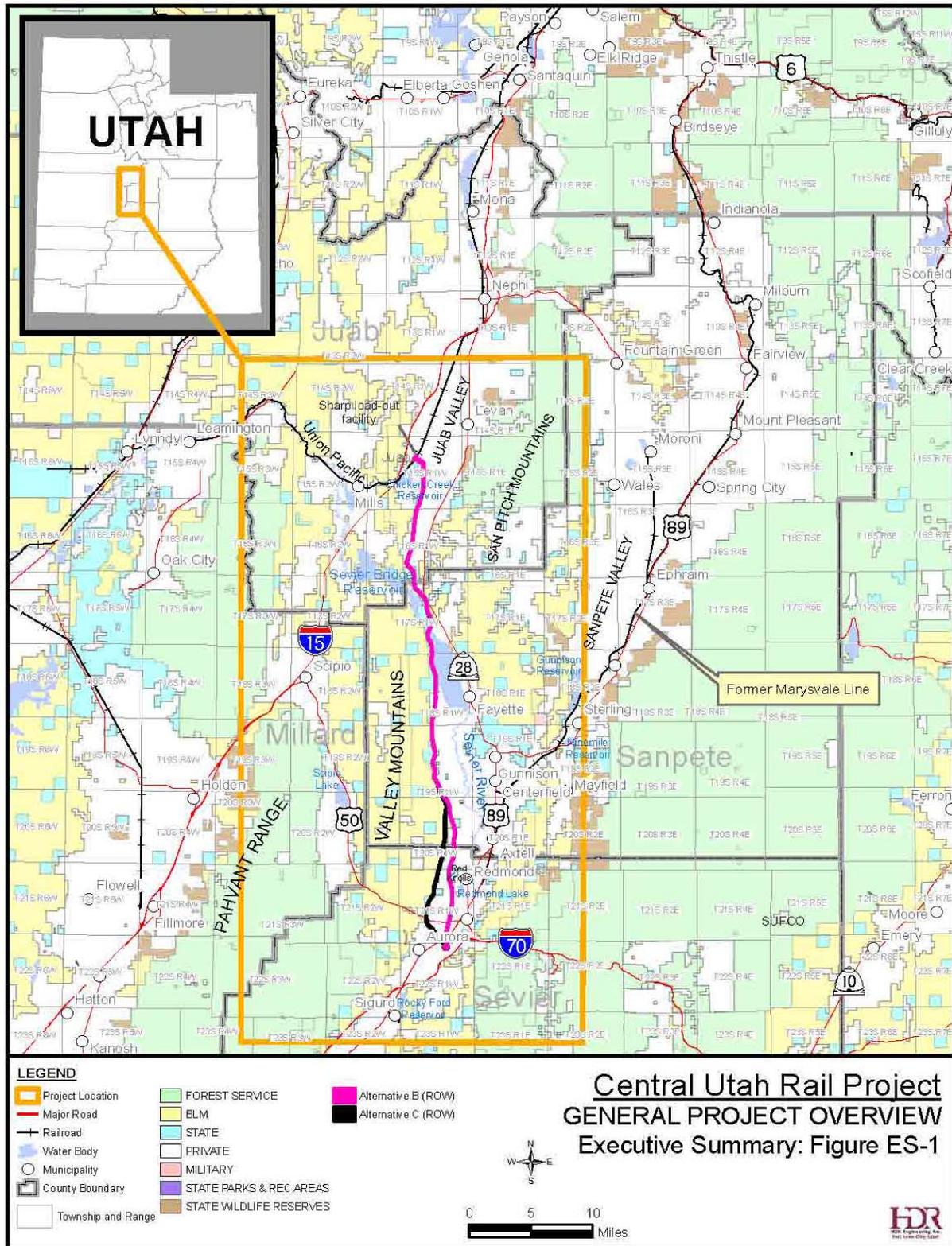
This Draft EIS is also available at the Board's website at www.stb.dot.gov.

Figure ES-1. General Project Overview



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Figure ES-1. General Project Overview



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