

## Summary of Major Conclusions

The Office of Environmental Analysis (OEA) has conducted an extensive review of the potential beneficial and adverse environmental impacts that could result from the Proposed Action, a new 43.2-mile rail line in Juab, Sanpete, and Sevier Counties, Utah. OEA has reached the following major conclusions based on the information available to date; consultation with Federal, state, and local agencies, a wide variety of organizations and citizens of Utah; and its own independent environmental analysis:

- 1) The Six County Association of Governments (SCAOG or the Applicant) is proposing to construct a 43.2-mile rail line in central Utah that would allow local industries to access rail transportation. The rail line would transport bulk commodities and would primarily serve the coal-mining operations of the Southern Utah Fuel Company (SUFCO) coal mine owned by Bowie Resources.
  - 2) The proposed rail line would remove from local streets up to 750 truck trips per day that currently haul bulk commodities out of the area. The trucks pass through the cities of Salina, Centerfield, Gunnison, and Levan on their way to the loading facility (as an example, trucks travel through downtown Salina at a frequency of about one truck every minute).
  - 3) The potential overall benefits from the reduction of truck traffic include improved safety, reduced traffic delay, reduced noise, reduced air emissions, reduced roadway maintenance costs, and longer pavement life.
  - 4) OEA found one receptor for which the Board's noise thresholds would be exceeded. These thresholds are (1) an incremental increase in noise levels of three decibels  $L_{dn}$  (day-night average sound level) or more and (2) an increase to a noise level of 65 decibels  $L_{dn}$  or greater. OEA concluded that there would be no adverse noise impacts associated with general operation (wayside noise) of any of the alternatives evaluated in this Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). One receptor would be within the 65-decibel level due to the requirement for the train operator to sound the train's horn at a road crossing.
  - 5) The Applicant's Proposed Action in the Draft EIS would fill 12.3 acres of wetlands. Three new alternatives were studied in this Supplemental Draft EIS that would reduce potential project-related wetland impacts. The alternatives studied in detail would fill 3.1 acres if the Applicant's Proposed Action in this Supplemental Draft EIS (Alternative B/B2) is constructed or 2.1 acres if Alternative B3/B2 is constructed.
  - 6) Construction of the proposed rail line would adversely affect 33 historic properties within the area of potential effects that are eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. OEA, in coordination with the Utah State Historic Preservation Officer, the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), is preparing a Programmatic Agreement to satisfy the requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.
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- 7) The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) determined that the Proposed Action would have no effect on threatened, endangered, or sensitive species. USFWS has designated critical habitat for two Federally listed species: one bird species, the southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*), and one plant species, the heliotrope milkvetch (*Astragalus montii*). Project-related construction and operation would not affect these species' critical habitat because the areas designated as critical habitat for each of these species are outside the project right-of-way. Also, BLM has stated that no threatened, endangered, or sensitive species are present on BLM-administered land in the project right-of-way.
- 8) The loss of 108 jobs in the trucking industry could be offset by new jobs from the rail industry.
- 9) Based on its independent environmental analysis and review of all comments received, OEA recommends that the Surface Transportation Board require the Applicant to implement the environmental mitigation measures set forth in Chapter 4, Mitigation, of this Supplemental Draft EIS if the Board grants SCAOG authority to construct and operate the proposed rail line. The environmental mitigation measures include all of the Applicant's voluntary mitigation as well as mitigation recommended by OEA in any Final Decision approving the Proposed Action.