

Chris Taggart

From: Redeen, Joan <jredeen@mt.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, November 15, 2023 8:15 AM
To: Dan Huls
Cc: lacey.sorensen@gmail.com; Ravalli County Commissioners Office; Vosen, Bob; Redeen, Joan; Cameron, Glen
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Railroad safety hazard

Commissioner Huls,
Thank you for forwarding the email you received from Lacey. Lacey also reached out directly to our office on 11/6.

I responded to Lacey on 11/9, as follows:

Lacey,

Thank you for reaching out to the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) regarding the rail lines on Eastside Highway (MT 269).

MDT staff has been partnering with Montana Rail Link (MRL), the owner of the Darby Line, on removal of unused portions of rail line in various locations throughout the Missoula District. We are working to get the remaining unused crossings removed from state highways along the Darby Line.

With the impending transition from MRL to Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway (BNSF) MDT is waiting to be informed of who our contacts at MRL will be. MRL will retain ownership of the Darby Line in this transition, however there will be some shuffling of staff that occurs in their organization. Once we know who to connect with at MRL we will start a new dialogue. We are not sure of what MRL's direction will be. Assuming we have MRL on board with removal of the rail lines, it is important to note that this will take some time to come to completion.

MDT previously looked at making these unused crossings Exempt, in the past. When an Exempt sign is posted at a railroad crossing transport vehicles no longer have to stop at that crossing. In order for MDT to place an Exempt sign, our legal department required MRL to sign an agreement with MDT and MRL was not willing to sign the agreement.

We will continue our efforts to work with MRL to make removal of these rail lines a reality.

Your comment has been shared with the appropriate staff and documented for the record.

If you have additional questions, please let me know.

Lacey did respond to the above email on 11/9, as well, as follows:

Thank you for your response and concern for this issue.

Lacey Sorensen

Thank you,



Joan Redeen

Executive Assistant - Communications | District 1 Missoula

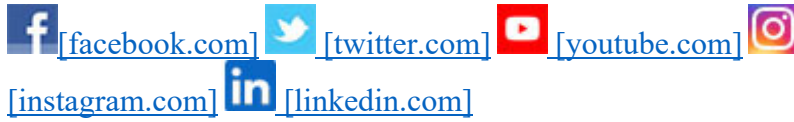
Montana Department of Transportation

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From: Dan Huls <dhuls@rc.mt.gov>
Sent: Monday, November 13, 2023 11:44 AM
To: Redeen, Joan <jredeen@mt.gov>
Cc: lacey.sorensen@gmail.com; Ravalli County Commissioners Office <commissioners@rc.mt.gov>
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] Railroad safety hazard

District 1 - Missoula

District Administrator, Bob Vosen

Bob
The Railroad crossing just south of Corvallis is the subject of the email I received from Lacey Sorensen, see below.
The crossing is dangerous and needs to be removed. Ravalli County has successfully worked with MRL to remove several crossings on County roads.

Please contact Montana Rail link to see if we can get this resolved before an accident occurs. If I can be of assistance please let me know.
Thank You

Dan Huls

Ravalli County Commissioner
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www.ravalli.us [ravalli.us]



From: Lacey Sorensen <lacey.sorensen@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, November 6, 2023 9:53 AM
To: Ravalli County Road And Bridge <RoadAndBridge@rc.mt.gov>; Ravalli County Commissioners Office <commissioners@rc.mt.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Railroad safety hazard

I have addressed this to the county road department as well as the county commissioners, mostly because I am not sure to whom this concern should go.
I am a resident of Corvallis and everyday I drive north on Eastside highway to the Corvallis schools. On the highway there is a patch of railroad that is not attached to anything and is not in use by the railroad. However buses and trucks are still required to come to a complete stop at the tracks every time they cross them. I feel like this is a huge safety hazard, especially on a highway, to have vehicles coming to a complete stop, not to mention when there is bad weather or when it is dark. I would like to recommend the removal or covering of this section of railroad to prevent vehicle accidents and promote safety. A similar patch of railroad was covered

on Willow Creek Rd and has improved the traffic flow, and made the area safer. I appreciate your attention to this matter and if there is anything I can do to gain awareness or interest I would be glad to help.

Thank you,

Lacey Sorensen

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