

PUBLIC SAFETY AND HEALTH COMMITTEE REPORT
Wednesday, January 4, 2012 9:00 AM – 10:00 AM
Council Chambers, 140 West Pine Street, Missoula, Montana

Members Present: Dave Strohmaier, Adam Hertz, Cynthia Wolken, Bob Jaffe, Jon Wilkins, Caitlin Cople, Dick Haines, Ed Childers

Members Not Present: Alex Taft

Other Present: Jim Carlson, Ann Cundy, Jim Lewis, Lowell Chandler, Nick Engelfried, Blair Logan, Jan Hoem, Harold Hoem, Mark Kersting

I. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

1. Approve minutes from [December 14, 2011](#). Minutes approved unanimously.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

III. CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

1. Discuss air quality issues related to railroad operations in and through Missoula. ([memo](#))—Regular Agenda (Dave Strohmaier) (Referred to committee: 10/24/11) **(Held in Committee)**

Dave Strohmaier provided an overview of the air quality issues related to railroad operations. He described the speakers in attendance.

Ann Cundy provided a [presentation](#) on the EPA Clean Diesel Act grant and the implementation of idle reduction technology for Montana Rail Link locomotives. She cited the fuel savings for Montana Rail Link, and she discussed the reduction of diesel emissions from the Missoula rail yard.

Bob Jaffe asked about the costs to implement the idle reduction technology.

Ann Cundy replied that the cost was less than the 1.13 million dollars that was awarded.

Bob Jaffe asked if any funding for this project was provided by MRL.

Ann Cundy replied that MRL provided labor.

Bob Jaffe commented on the fact that it took public funding to finance the implementation of technology that paid for itself within three months.

Jim Carlson provided a [presentation](#) on emissions inventory for particulate matter in the Missoula air shed. He described the sampling and analysis of air shed particulate matter.

Dave Strohmaier asked about the presence of coal dust in the samples of particulate matter.

Jim Carlson stated that MRL sprays a cellulose substance on the coal cars to reduce the spread of coal dust along the rail lines. He discussed the crystalline nature of coal in relation to particulate matter.

Cynthia Wolken asked about the methodology used to gather particulate data.

Jim Carlson replied that samples were taken within the Missoula City limits, and that residents living closer to the rail yard would experience more exposure to diesel particulates. He also pointed out that residents living closer to wood burning or busy transportation corridors would be exposed to higher levels of the respective particulate matter. He discussed the legacy wood burning stoves and fireplaces within the Missoula City limits.

Bob Jaffe asked about the methodology and the locations used when gathering data of particulate emissions.

Jim Carlson stated that the samples were gathered from his building which is located a block and a half from the rail yard.

Jim Lewis with Montana Rail Link discussed Montana Rail Link's operations and employment. He discussed the possibility of increased coal traffic on the rail line. He stated that if the current volume of coal doubles, that would be significant. He discussed a [study](#) (with an [attachment](#)) that was commissioned in Billings to investigate the feasibility of relocating Billings' rail yard.

Dave Strohmaier asked if the telephone number to report excessive railroad crossing blockage was available.

Jim Lewis responded that the number is 800-498-4838.

Jon Wilkins described citizen concerns regarding coal dust. He asked where MRL's coal dust remediation is performed.

Jim Lewis responded that mitigation is not performed in the Missoula rail yard, but is primarily performed at the mines. He described MRL's concern for their worker's health, and concern for safety. He described the mitigation process. He discussed studies that indicate the majority of the dust blows out of the coal cars prior to travelling through Missoula.

Jon Wilkins asked if the University of Montana is addressing diesel emissions from their busses.

Dave Strohmaier suggested that bus emissions should be discussed at a later date.

Jim Lewis described the efficiency of rail transportation versus trucking.

Jan Hoem stated that she is a member of Montana Elders for a Livable Tomorrow (MELT) and is the new chair of the Air Quality Advisory Committee. She stated that her comments are in her capacity as a citizen. She provided a [handout](#) of a study by the Sightline Institute.

Harold Hoem stated that he is a member of Montana Elders for a Livable Tomorrow (MELT). He expressed his concerns regarding the potential for a significant increase in coal transportation through the City of Missoula. He stated that he has heard that as many as forty trains per day would be transported through Missoula per the increase in exports as predicted by coal producers. He expressed concerns regarding the noise factor. He also expressed concern about passenger rail service being supplanted by the increase in commodity traffic. He expressed concern regarding the rail crossing leading into the Rattlesnake neighborhood.

Blair Logan read commentary from her friend Stacy Max. Stacy expressed concern about the impact of particulate matter on her children and garden. She described the impact of the noise from rail operations. Blair stated that the Northside is gentrifying and changing for the better.

Lowell Chandler expressed his concern regarding coal dust. He displayed his hands, which were covered with a black substance. He discussed the construction of new coal ports to the West of Missoula.

Nick Engelfried expressed his opposition to the potential increase in coal traffic through Missoula. He expressed his concern that the Missoula County Health Department does not conduct ongoing air quality monitoring. He expressed support for the installation of idle reduction technology for Montana Rail Link locomotives, but feels that the increase in traffic will negate the overall reduction of particulate emissions.

Mark Kersting expressed his concerns regarding Montana Rail Link's operations and the resulting noise and pollution.

Bob Jaffe recounted a meeting with Montana Rail Link regarding coal dust. Bob feels that coal dust is a concern to MRL, and the company works to remediate the concern. He asked if there was a way for citizens to have the black dust found on their properties tested to determine its origin.

Jim Carlson stated that the black dust could be from a number of sources. He agreed that a chemical analysis could be performed, perhaps by the University.

Bob Jaffe would like to see some testing performed.

Jim Carlson described particulate fallout.

Bob Jaffe asked about the study regarding the relocation of Billings' rail yard.

Jim Lewis discussed.

Bob Jaffe asked for a clarification of MRL's traffic

Jim Lewis clarified.

Bob Jaffe asked Jim Lewis if MRL offers transloading for local businesses.

Jim Lewis replied that MRL does indeed offer transloading services to local businesses.

Caitlin Cople inquired about local employment at Montana Rail Link, and if an increase in rail traffic would lead to an increase in local employment.

Jim Lewis responded that local employment would almost certainly increase as rail traffic grows.

Caitlin Cople asked if the coupling of rail cars could cause coal dust to dislodge and be released into the air shed.

Jim Lewis feels that any residual coal dust is dislodged before the cars travel through Missoula.

IV. REGULAR AGENDA ITEM

V. HELD AND ON-GOING AGENDA ITEMS

1. Police Department Update – Ongoing in Committee. (Mark Muir)
2. Fire Department Update – Ongoing in Committee (Mike Painter)
3. Health Department Update – Ongoing in Committee. (Ellen Leahy)
4. Eat Smart Coalition information. ([memo](#))—Regular Agenda (Jason Wiener) (Referred to committee: 07/11/11)
5. Consider Discuss revisiting cell phone restrictions. ([memo](#)) – Regular Agenda (Dave Strohmaier) (Referred to committee: 10/17/11)

VI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 10:08 AM. Submitted by Gregg Schonbachler.