

L58
EPP

Dennis A. Johnson
6922 Meadowbrook Blvd.
St. Louis Park, Minn.

August 15, 1969

Walter Hickel
Secretary of the Interior
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Hickel:

My family and I just completed a delightful automobile trip through the western states and encountered a couple of very distressing problems about which we vowed to write you as soon as we reached home. Hence this letter.

The first concerns the status of one of the most historic enterprises of the American west, namely what remains of the Denver and Rio Grande Western narrow gauge railroad in southwestern Colorado. In Durango I learned that the ICC has just given the D&RGW permission to abandon one of the last two segments of this once extensive railroad. In danger now is the line from Durango to Alamosa, Colo., which winds through some of the most breathtaking and isolated mountain and desert country in our country. As construction crews were putting this line over Cumbres Pass in the early 1880s, they learned of the murder of President James Garfield and erected a monument in his memory. It still stands beside the track. Also slated for abandonment is the stretch from Durango to Farmington, N.M., following the Los Animas River through beautiful deserts and green valleys.


The Rio Grande narrow gauge was built under the direction of the indomitable Otto Mears, who defiantly blasted rights-of-way through the Rockies to link the gold and silver fields of Colorado with the transcontinental railroads. Since 1949, his incredible network of trackage has gradually been abandoned, including the entire Rio Grande Southern, which went into the isolated mountain city of Telluride via some of the most beautiful canyons in the country.

Granted, these routes lost their profit potential for the Rio Grande RR, which has a sound case when it said it could not afford to operate them. But a vast number of scholastic and amateur historians, railroad buffs, scenery seekers and others such as myself feel that the deliberate scrapping of this railroad is tragic and unnecessary. A small section remains in operation... the line from Durango to Silverton, which the railroad operates profitably for tourists. But even that line is subject to the profit and loss formula, and therefore isn't safe.

Doesn't it seem possible that this railroad...all that's left of it...could be brought under federal protection as a National Historic Monument. I think it qualifies, and I doubt very much that the Rio Grande management would object to the Department of

Interior paying the scrap value of the remaining track and equipment. Once a right-of-way is relinquished, it's very difficult to regain.

Unfortunately the situation is very urgent, and perhaps very difficult. But maybe the railroad can be persuaded to wait voluntarily or through an injunction of some kind while the Interior Department studies the matter. It's tough to know where to start, and I'm turning to you. Your own home state has a railroad of equal fame...the White Pass and Yukon, which should be saved at all costs.

 The second problem is simply this: During a sidewalk conversation with a couple of citizens in Reno, I was told that the private interests in the growing town of Lake Tahoe, Nevada, are dumping their raw sewage into that beautiful mountain border lake. Supposedly the lake is beginning to deteriorate rapidly. Outrageous!

My sincere thanks.

Sincerely,

Dennis Johnson
Dennis A. Johnson

p.s. I've sent a similar request to Sens. Walter Mondale and Peter Dominick, and to Gov. John Love.

Dennis A. Johnson
6922 Meadowbrook Blvd.
St. Louis Park, Minn.

August 15, 1969

Senator Walter Mondale
Washington, D.C.

Dear Senator Mondale:

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The first concerns the status of one of the most historic enterprises of the American west, namely what remains of the Denver and Rio Grande Western narrow gauge railroad in southwestern Colorado. In Durango I learned that the ICC has just given the D&RGW permission to abandon one of the last two segments of this once extensive railroad. In danger now is the line from Durango to Alamosa, Colo., which winds through some of the most breathtaking and isolated mountain and desert country in our country. As construction crews were putting this line over Cumbres Pass in the early 1880s, they learned of the murder of President James Garfield and erected a monument in his memory. It still stands beside the track. Also slated for abandonment is the stretch from Durango to Farmington, N.M., following the Los Animas through beautiful desert and green valley.

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Granted, these routes lost their profit potential and the Rio Grande had a sound case when it said it could not afford to operate them. But a vast number of scholastic and amateur historians, railroad buffs, scenery seekers and others such as myself feel that the deliberate scrapping of this railroad is tragic and unnecessary. A small section remains in operation... the line from Durango to Silverton, which the railroad operates profitably for tourists. But even that line is subject to the profit and loss formula, and therefore isn't safe.

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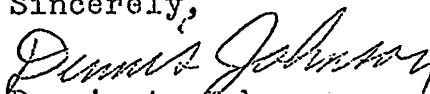
Interior paying the scrap value of the remaining track and equipment. Once a right-of-way is relinquished, it's very difficult to regain.

Unfortunately the situation is very urgent, and perhaps very difficult. But perhaps the railroad can be persuaded to wait up voluntarily or through an injunction of sorts while the Interior Department studies the matter. It's tough to know where to start, but you've done an admirable job as a liberal senator, and I'm turning to you.

The second problem is simply this: During a sidewalk conversation with a couple citizens in Reno, I was told that the private interests in the growing commercial town of Lake Tahoe, Nevada, are dumping raw sewage into that beautiful mountain border lake. Supposedly the lake is beginning to deteriorate rapidly. Outrageous.

My sincere thanks.

Sincerely,


Dennis A. Johnson

p.s. I've sent a similar request to Sen. Peter Dominick, Walter Hickel, and Gov. John Love, Colo.

FROM: ~~SECRETARY~~

DATE: 8-20-69

TO: 1. DCCO

2. George Hartzog

B draft
7/8/2)

3.

4.

~~OPP~~

FOR:

APPROVAL WSC-MO-DC

INFORMATION

PER OUR CONVERSATION

COMMENT

ACTION AS APPROPRIATE

DRAFT REPLY FOR SECRETARY'S SIGNATURE

REPLY ON BEHALF OF THE SECRETARY

AS REQUESTED

AND:

RETURN

FILE

FORWARD

SEE ME

REMARKS:

George -
Is this anything we as
a Dept. can do, anything about
canism? or is it strictly D/R?
Cambria Pass is breath taking.
If this is answerable would
you - and then send it
INT.-SUP. SEC., WASH., D.C. to (over)

Mr. Kline for the
Lake Tahoe list -
Thank you.
L. Bundy

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
 ASSISTANT SECRETARY - WATER POLLUTION CONTROL
 Washington, D. C.

ROUTING SLIP

Date 8/24

	From	To
ASSISTANT SECRETARY KLEIN		
McCormick	X	
Singer		
Reinhardt		
Everett		
Stern		
Kerr		
Teare		
WATER POLLUTION CONTROL ADMINISTRATION		
Dominick		
Barnhill		
FWPCA MAIL CENTER		X
OFFICE OF SALINE WATER		
OSW MAIL CENTER		
OFFICE OF WATER RESOURCES RESEARCH		
OWRR MAIL CENTER		

- FOR:
- Concurrence
 - File
 - Information
 - Investigate & Advise
 - Return To
 - Recommendation
 - See Me
 - Reply for Signature of

REMARKS:

*Please handle directly with
 Park Service (Brooks)
 W. G. ...*

L58
CP#

Recvd 9/14
B



THE JICARILLA APACHE TRIBE

P. O. BOX 147 • DULCE, NEW MEXICO 87528

August 29, 1969

Director, National Park Service
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Sir:

The tribal councils of both the Southern Ute and Jicarilla Apache Tribes met in special session August 25, 1969 to discuss the abandonment of the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad which passes through both reservations. Since the abandonment would seriously affect both our reservations and its peoples, it was unanimously decided to appoint a Joint Task Force, comprised of two councilmen from each reservation, to study this problem in depth.

On August 27, 1969 this Joint Task Force met with its consultants and after much discussion passed a resolution requesting the National Park Service to provide this Task Force with its expertise in the preparation of its final report outlining in detail, how the preservation of this railroad would benefit both of our tribes socially and economically. A copy of this resolution was presented to Mr. Frank Kowski, Regional Director of the National Park Service, at the public meeting held in Santa Fe by the National Park Service to discuss the feasibility of preserving the railroad as a National Monument. The Southern Ute and Jicarilla Apache Tribes are requesting that tourism concessions be reserved for them.

Anything your office can do to assist our Indian peoples along these lines will be appreciated.

Sincerely yours,

Charlie Vigil
Charlie Vigil, President
Jicarilla Apache Tribe

Enclosure

Indians were going to help us in our study

when info dicasted we will contact them

No report has been made. Team members will contact tribe and include the info in our report.



RESOLUTION

The following resolution was adopted by the Joint Task Force of the Jicarilla Apache and Southern Ute Tribes:

WHEREAS, the Tribal Council of the Jicarilla Apache Tribe of Dulce, New Mexico and the Tribal Council of the Southern Ute Tribe of Ignacio, Colorado, in joint meeting held in Ignacio, Colorado on August 25, 1969, created a joint task force to work toward saving the railroad as the same crosses the two reservations; and

WHEREAS, the Tribal Councils, in joint session discussed the need for the preservation of the railroad across the reservations with terminal points in Ignacio, Colorado and Antonito, Colorado so that freight service as the same existed in past years can be re-established and more importantly, to integrate passenger service into recreational and tourism developments which both Tribes are presently initiating and expect to have in full operation within the foreseeable future; and

WHEREAS, the Joint Task Force has been assigned the responsibility for preparing a presentation to justify to all persons and groups concerned the need for the continuation of the railroad; and

WHEREAS, the Secretary of Interior has pledged the mobilization of all Bureaus and Agencies within the Department of Interior to assist Indian tribes in prospering economically and socially; and

WHEREAS, the National Park Service has been directed to determine the feasibility of the preservation of the narrow-gauge railroad as a federally owned facility, and, to this end, its officers, employees and consultants, with expertise in the field, are preparing a report which will embody its findings and conclusions; and

WHEREAS, the Joint Task Force will need expert advise in the preparation of its report to the National Park Service;

Now therefore, be it RESOLVED by the Joint Task Force of the Jicarilla Apache Tribe of New Mexico and the Southern Ute Tribe of Ignacio, Colorado that it respectfully petition the Director of the National Park Service to make available to the Joint Task Force of the two Tribes, the services of the officers, employees and consultants with expertise in such matters to assist the Task Force in the preparation of its report; and

Be it further RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be forwarded to the Secretary of Interior, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, the Director of the National Park Service, and the Congressional Delegation of the states of New Mexico and Colorado.

JOINT TASK FORCE OF THE JICARILLA TRIBE AND THE SOUTHERN UTE TRIBE:

by: J. D. Garcia
J. D. Garcia, Councilman
Jicarilla

by: Sam Baltazar
Sam Baltazar, Councilman
Jicarilla

by: Chris A. Baker
Chris A. Baker, Councilman
So. Ute

by: Bonny Kent
Bonny Kent, Councilman
So. Ute

August 27, 1969

Interstate Commerce Commission
Washington, D.C. 20423

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN

September 2, 1969

SEP 5 1969

Honorable Walter F. Mondale
United States Senate
Washington, D. C. 20510

Dear Senator Mondale:

This will acknowledge receipt of your communication of August 25, 1969, forwarding a copy of a letter sent to you by Mr. Dennis A. Johnson of St. Louis Park, Minnesota, suggesting that the Denver and Rio Grande's narrow-gauge railroad line in New Mexico and Colorado be acquired by the Federal Government as a national historic monument.

By report and order dated July 11, 1969, the Commission authorized the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad, in Finance Docket No. 24745, to abandon its narrow-gauge railroad between Farmington, New Mexico, and Alamosa and Antonito, Colorado. I am enclosing a copy of the Commission's report which sets forth the factors underlying its decision.

If the railroad exercises the authority granted, the line will no longer be subject to the jurisdiction of this Commission and its authority would not be required for it to be acquired as a national historic monument.

DATE:

September 10, 1969

FNP

United States Senate

RE: Mr. Dennis A. Johnson
6922 Meadowbrook Blvd.
St. Louis Park, Minnesota

Respectfully referred to

Congressional Liaison
Department of the Interior
Washington, D. C.

COMMUNICATIONS SECTION
SEP 11 1969

.....
For your consideration of the attached
letter, and for a report.

 To be forwarded directly to the
constituent, with a copy to me
for my information and records.

xxx To me in duplicate to accompany
return enclosure. *(C)*

 As requested below.

Additional comments:

Is there any way that the
Department might be able to take
this over as a historic site.
Any comments you have to offer
would be very helpful.

Please refer response to attention of

 Robert Mannion , of my staff ,

on the outside of the envelope only.

Thank you.

WFM

WALTER F. MONDALE
U.S. SENATE

LUJAN, JR.
New Mexico

1317 10TH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

DEPT. OF INTERIOR
SEP 9 1 34 PM '69
OFF. OF THE SECRETARY

September 5, 1969

Mr. George Hartzog, Director
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C.

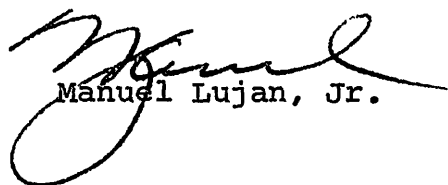
Dear Mr. Hartzog,

Enclosed is a copy of a recently passed resolution of the Jicarilla Apache Tribe concerning the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad.

Anything that the National Park Service can do to help them would be appreciated.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,


Manuel Lujan, Jr.

ML/pap

Reproduced from the Unclassified/Declassified Holdings of the National Archives

R E S O L U T I O N

The following resolution was adopted by the Joint Task Force of the Jicarilla Apache and Southern Ute Tribes:

WHEREAS, the Tribal Council of the Jicarilla Apache Tribe of Dulce, New Mexico and the Tribal Council of the Southern Ute Tribe of Ignacio, Colorado, in joint meeting held in Ignacio, Colorado on August 25, 1969, created a joint task force to work toward saving the railroad as the same crosses the two reservations; and

WHEREAS, the Tribal Councils, in joint session discussed the need for the preservation of the railroad across the reservations with terminal points in Ignacio, Colorado and Antonito, Colorado so that freight service as the same existed in past years can be re-established and more importantly, to integrate passenger service into recreational and tourism developments which both Tribes are presently initiating and expect to have in full operation within the foreseeable future; and

WHEREAS, the Joint Task Force has been assigned the responsibility for preparing a presentation to justify to all persons and groups concerned the need for the continuation of the railroad; and

WHEREAS, the Secretary of Interior has pledged the mobilization of all Bureaus and Agencies within the Department of Interior to assist Indian tribes in prospering economically and socially; and

WHEREAS, the National Park Service has been directed to determine the feasibility of the preservation of the narrow-gauge railroad as a federally owned facility, and, to this end, its officers, employees and consultants, with expertise in the field, are preparing a report which will embody its findings and conclusions; and

WHEREAS, the Joint Task Force will need expert advise in the preparation of its report to the National Park Service;

Now therefore, be it RESOLVED by the Joint Task Force of the Jicarilla Apache Tribe of New Mexico and the Southern Ute Tribe of Ignacio, Colorado that it respectfully petition the Director of the National Park Service to make available to the Joint Task Force of the two Tribes, the services of the officers, employees and consultants with expertise in such matters to assist the Task Force in the preparation of its report; and

Be it further RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be forwarded to the Secretary of Interior, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, the Director of the National Park Service, and the Congressional Delegation of the states of New Mexico and Colorado.

JOINT TASK FORCE OF THE JICARILLA TRIBE AND THE SOUTHERN UTE TRIBE:

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Jicarilla

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Sam Baltazar, Councilman
Jicarilla

by: Chris A. Baker
Chris A. Baker, Councilman
So. Ute

by: Bonny Kent
Bonny Kent, Councilman
So. Ute

August 27, 1969

9/10/69

Hon. Manuel Lujan, Jr.
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Lujan:

We are pleased to acknowledge your inquiry in behalf of the
Hicorilla Apache Tribe concerning the Denver and Rio Grande
Western Railroads.

We appreciate your interest in this matter and will provide you
a reply at our earliest opportunity.

Sincerely yours,


Director

TGWood:bb1:9-10-69

9/15/69

Hon. Walter F. Mondale
United States Senate
Washington, D.C.

Dear Senator Mondale:

We are pleased to acknowledge your inquiry in behalf of
Mr. Dennis A. Johnson concerning the Denver and Rio Grande Narrow
Gauge Railroad. We appreciate your interest in this matter and
will provide you a reply at our earliest opportunity.

Sincerely yours,


Director

TGWood:jad 9/15/69

M. Brooks 9/10
T. Bright 9/15
G. Taylor 9/16
S. Joseph 9/16
T. Wood 9/19
Melia 9-19
Flynn 9-22
Jensen 9-22

105-2115

SEP 23 1969

Mr. Manuel Lopez, Jr.
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Lopez:

Thank you for your recent letter and the copy of the resolution requesting that the National Park Service assist the Joint Task Force of the Sierrita Apache and Southern Ute Tribes in the preparation of its report on the Denver and Rio Grande Western Narrow Gauge Railroad.

It is understood that Mr. Charles Vigil, President of the Sierrita Apache Tribe, has held discussions with the Regional Director of our Southwest Region. A member of the National Park Service team, which is now conducting the alternatives study of the narrow gauge portion of the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad, will be working with him to meet the requests presented by the resolution.

We will also be seeking information which will be utilized as a part of the overall evaluation of the alternatives for preservation of the narrow gauge line.

We acknowledge the interest of the Sierrita Apache and Southern Ute Tribes and their request that tourist commissions be referred to them.

Thank you for your interest.

A similar reply has been sent to Mr. Vigil in response to his direct reply to us.

Sincerely yours,

(sgd) J. E. N. Jensen

Acting Director

9-19
hth

cc: El. Mr. Shine, w/c of inc.
Regional Director, Southwest (2), w/c of inc.
SEC-C, w/c of inc.
C, Mr. Taylor, w/c of inc.
C, Mr. Brooks, w/c of inc.

cc: CPP, Mrs. Livingston
DAIS, Mr. Melvin, w/c of inc.
MJB:brooks:RUMed:bb19-19-69

M. Brooks 9/10
J. Bright 9/15
G. Taylor 9/16
S. Joseph 9/14
T. Wood 9/19

155-677

SEP 23 1969

Mr. Charles Vigil
President, The Silverilla Apache Tribe
Post Office Box 117
Delta, New Mexico 87528

Dear Mr. Vigil:

Thank you for your letter and the copy of the resolution requesting that the National Park Service assist the Joint Stock Force of the Silverilla Apache and Southern Ute Tribes in the preparation of its report on the Denver and Rio Grande Western Narrow Gauge Railroad.

We understand that you have held discussions with the Regional Director of our Southwest Region on this matter. A member of the National Park Service team, which is now conducting the alternative study of the narrow gauge portion of the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad, will be working with you to meet the requests presented by your resolution.

We will also be seeking information which will be utilized as a part of the overall evaluation of the alternatives for preservation of the narrow gauge line.

We acknowledge the interests of the Silverilla Apache and Southern Ute Tribes and your request that tourist concessions be reserved to them.

Thank you for your interest, and we look forward to working with you.

Sincerely yours,

(sgd) J. E. N. Jensen

Acting Director

cc: CL, Mr. Shine, w/c of inc.
Regional Director, Southwest (2), w/c of inc.
SSC-C, w/c of inc.

C, Mr. Taylor, w/c of inc.
C, Mr. Brooks, w/c of inc.
CFP, Mrs. Livingston
DAIS, Mr. Melvin, w/c of inc.

9-19
[Handwritten signature]

MGBrooks:bbl:9-19-69

M Brooks 9/23
Fly 9/28
Joseph 9-25
James 9/25

158-CPP

SEP 25 1969

Mr. Dennis A. Johnson
6922 Mendenbrook Boulevard
Saint Louis Park, Minnesota 55426

Dear Mr. Johnson:

We appreciate receiving your comments regarding preservation of the narrow gauge portion of the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad and your comments regarding pollution of Lake Tahoe.

The National Park Service is now conducting a study to obtain information on the historic, scenic, scientific and recreational resources in order to determine the significance of the Durango to Alamosa section of the railroad and the alternatives for its preservation. This study should result in a determination whether, if feasible, at least a representative segment can and should continue to be preserved for public use and understanding of this important phase of American development.

In regards to your comment that raw sewage has been entering Lake Tahoe, you will be interested in knowing that a major program is underway to export all domestic sewage from the Lake Tahoe drainage. This involves a financial undertaking with substantial State and Federal support. Construction grants totaling almost \$5 million have been made by the Federal Water Pollution Control Administration. The State-Federal water quality surveillance program established for the lake reveals that its excellent quality is being maintained.

We hope you will continue to express your thoughts on these important conservation and preservation matters.

Sincerely yours,

(sgd) Robert B. Moore

Assistant Director

Handwritten signature
9-22

cc: *CL-Mr. Shyne*
Regional Director, Southwest Region
Chief, SSC/ORP

H
CPP Reading File (2) *ORLS-Mr. Melvin*
MGBrooks; mj 9-22-69

mj

T. Wood 9/22

McKin 9-22

McBrooks 9-23

Burke 9/23

Fly 9/24

Johnson 9-25

Moore 9/25

158-1022

SEP 25 1969

Hon. Walter F. Mondale
United States Senate
Washington, D.C.

Dear Senator Mondale:

Thank you for your recent letter in behalf of Mr. Dennis A. Johnson regarding preservation of the narrow gauge portion of the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad and pollution of Lake Tahoe.

The National Park Service is now conducting a study to obtain information on the historic, scenic, scientific and recreational resources in order to determine the significance of the Durango to Alamosa section of the railroad and the alternatives for its preservation. This study should result in a determination whether, if feasible, at least a representative segment can and should continue to be preserved for public use and understanding of this important phase of American development.

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We appreciate Mr. Johnson's interest in expressing his thoughts on these important conservation and preservation matters.

A similar reply has been sent to Mr. Johnson in reply to his direct inquiry to Secretary of the Interior Hickel.

Sincerely yours,

(sgd) Robert B. Moore

Assistant Director

Handwritten signature
9-22

Enclosure (Constituent's material returned)

cc: R CL - Mr. Shine
Regional Director, Southwest(2)
Chief, SSC-ORP } each w/c of inc.

H
each w/c of inc.
CFF - Mr. Brooks
DALS - Mr. Melvin
MEBrooks: TGwood:jad 9/22/69