

My name is Glen Reaser, my ranch is among the many wetlands, wildlife, ranches, farms, business's, towns, and cities that will be severely impacted if the proposed DM&E new rail line is built, I am opposed to this project.

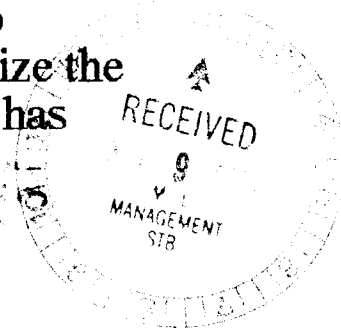
The proposed new rail line comes off the existing rail line Northeast of my ranch near milepost 31 and runs West through the house where my son lives and also through a 48 by 80 foot calving shed we use in the spring for calving around 200 head of cows. The right of way through our buildings is 400 feet wide, this also would destroy a 60 by 90 foot shop, an older house, and older 3 car garage, an older shed, an open shed, corrals, an excellent well, and render useless, because of the noise created by the number of high speed coal trains passing nearby, an excellent shelter belt that is about 250 feet wide by 1320 feet long, and provides winter protection for our livestock, it is also home to many songbirds, pheasants, grouse, turkey, and deer. We have also been wintering around 500 head of calves at this location and when we sell them they are loaded from the corrals at this location. The noise and traffic created by the coal trains would also make this impossible to do. Beyond our buildings the right of way expands to 700 feet wide and according to a map provided by DM&E involves about 1.67 miles of new track and takes 92.45 acres of land. You could not pick a worse place to run this proposed rail line through our ranch if you tried, the effect it will have will be devastating! We have not come up with any alternative places that would have the shelter that this location has to care for our livestock if this rail line is built through our ranch and our land is taken. In the Draft Environmental Impact Statement volume 1 page 2-6 it states "engineers consulted with landowners to identify alignment locations that would avoid or minimize impact". In my case and many other cases I am aware of the only thing we were informed of was where the proposed rail line was going to go, no consideration was given by DM&E to "avoid or minimize the impact" by changing the route of the new line! DM&E has

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plotted a route based strictly on elevation, and they have not shown a willingness to move the route regardless of the impact on the landowner, the environment, or wildlife!

There is also no mention that I have found of the use of "Eminent Domain" to take our land. I find it incredible that in this instance a privately owned, for profit railroad, DM&E, can use "Eminent Domain" to "take" our land from us! In most cases I am aware of the landowners affected by this project are unwilling to sell to them. "Eminent Domain" should only be used to take land when the public good is at stake and in this case it clearly is not, the only one benefiting from this new proposed rail line would be a for profit, privately owned railroad hauling coal, DM&E!

Concerning the comment period I feel it should be extended, we have less than 30 days to comment at hearings the STB has scheduled in our area and 90 days to make a written comment. In my opinion given the size of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement the time allotted is not sufficient to examine it and provide oral or written comments. I would urge you to schedule hearings in January of 2001 and extend the written comment period to at least 180 days. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement is a very complicated and difficult document for the average person to read and understand.

On page ES-21 of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement Executive Summary concerning "safety" on alternative C through Wyoming and Western South Dakota it says there would be "no significant impact". To me this is unbelievable, with 37 trains per day over a mile long running 49 mph this is a train every 39 minutes, in my opinion it would have a very significant impact on the safety of the area. Surely there are safety studies in other areas similar to our area that have high speed coal trains passing through that could be used. Another question is who is responsible for the costs of signals or gates at

road crossings, and who designates what crossings get signals or gates? Who pays the costs of elevated roads over railroads? Would the local county and state governments be required to fund these items and what would be the cost?

This proposed new rail line will pass through over 3200 wetlands, evidently DM&E has special privileges when building through wetlands, I have about 1\4 of an acre of wetlands in the middle of a 100 acre farm field and I am not allowed to do any farming, draining or filling in or I would be fined or possibly put in prison. No individual or company that I know of are permitted to drain or fill in any wetlands . Why would DM&E be permitted to do this? This would cause a significant loss of wildlife habitat and would hinder the natural recharge of our underground aquifers! A retired District Conservation Officer commented to me "if this proposed new rail line is built it will be the largest environmental disaster South Dakota has ever experienced"!

What was the cost of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, was the cost funded totally by tax dollars?

In closing I would emphasize this project should be stopped, DM & E already has a right of way they could use, they should not be allowed to "take" land from unwilling sellers using "Eminent Domain" and disrupt wildlife, homeowners, towns, cities, farms, and ranches!

Thank you allowing me to testify.

Glen Reaser
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