

My name is Lea Stodart, and I am opposed to the DM&E Expansion Project.

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I would first like to request an additional 180 days minimum for the comment period on this DEIS. There is no way to get through this in the time you have allotted. Not to mention the 404 permit application that is even more difficult to comment on since the deadline on that 32 pounds of information is November 29, much earlier than the deadline on this 32 pounds of the DEIS. I also request that the 404 should be extended and also be more readily available to the public. The nearest complete copy is 100 miles from me. Everyone on the interested parties list should have received the 404 permit application.

After starting to read the information in the DEIS I wonder if there was any common sense used when preparing it. There is no rhyme nor reason when reading it. The table of contents is incomplete, there is no index, the glossary is lacking many words needing definitions and try to find a name in the interested parties. The graphs are illegible and difficult to find afterwards when trying to refer back to them. And I would like to see you try to find a specific place on the maps. They are as ludicrous as the first maps brought to us by DM&E at the first meetings. They haven't even labeled highways correctly. The corp. maps are much more readable – yet they only are for Alternative C, and are not easily available.

To comment more specifically in Volume 6 Page A-61 footnote 41 states "DM&E supports its assumptions by stating that it expects the growth rate for electricity generated by coal-fired plants in the core market areas to be 2.2% per year, requiring capacity utilization factors to exceed 75% by the 2010." DM&E can not be a substantial source and authority, especially with regard to assertions. And particularly where in Volume 1, Chapter 1, Table 1-5 it says the growth rate will only be 1.1%. Which percentage do you expect to stand behind?

In Volume 3-A Table 4.1-7 County Wetland Acreage for South Dakota, the total wetland acres is 179.4. After making several phone calls (all long distance by the way) I found in Volume 1 the general project-part 6, page 2, Table 1, Summary of the wetland impacts in the 404 permit applications by the US Army Corps of Engineers it states the effected wetlands in Eastern SD are 319 acres, Western SD 211 acres,

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a total of 530 acres. A difference of 350.6 acres. I would say that is a major discrepancy.

In Volume 1 page 1-18 it says "The 1996 coal production at 5 of these mines (Caballo, Belle Ayr, Caballo Rojo, Cordero and Antelope) was 131 million tons, yet only 80.8 million tons were shipped because of transportation problems." 41 Footnote 41 says - Hong, B.D. at 34. Footnote 34 says-Hong B.D. 1997. Annual Review 1995: Coal Overview. Mining Engineering, Vol. 48, No. 5 pp 41-46 May 1996.) After more phone calls I received this reference and there is absolutely no mention of how many tons were shipped from those 5 mines nor is there mention on any transportation problems. So you could say not only is this DEIS misleading in places, it's actually fraudulent.

In closing I'm not sure if you YOU the Surface Transportation Board thinks that we are too stupid to see how inadequate this DEIS is, but I think that you a branch of the federal Government should be ashamed at having even accepted it to mail to us. Have you forgotten that you also work for us not just the DM&E railroad. Their financial inadequacies should not even bear relevance in the DEIS page 1-2 Volume 1. This DEIS should be thrown out and completely redone! I also reserve the right to submit further comments as I read further on into this debacle.

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