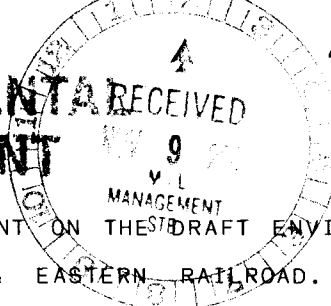


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200356

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD:

THANK YOU FOR ALLOWING ME TO COMMENT ON THE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR THE DAKOTA, MINNESOTA & EASTERN RAILROAD. I AM SOMEWHAT UNINFORMED OF SOME ITEMS CONTAINED IN THE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT DUE TO FACTORS BEYOND MY CONTROL. THOSE FACTORS BEING THE SHORT PERIOD OF TIME GIVEN TO REVIEW THE VERY COMPLEX AND LENGTHY DEIS, AND THE LACK OF PERTINENT INFORMATION PROVIDED BY THE RAILROAD. WITH SO MANY DIFFERENT DESIGNATED ROUTES AND THE LACK OF MAPS, IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO KNOW WHICH LANDS WOULD BE AFFECTED. IT IS RIDICULOUS TO ASSUME WE CAN ADEQUATELY COMMENT ON A PROJECT WHEN SO MUCH OF THE INFORMATION HAS BEEN KEPT FROM A MAJORITY OF THE PEOPLE IT AFFECTS. LANDOWNERS HAVE RECEIVED VERY LITTLE FACTUAL INFORMATION REGARDING THIS PROJECT. I ALSO HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO REVIEW A COPY OF THE CORPS OF ENGINEER'S 404 PERMIT APPLICATION NOR HAVE I SEEN THE LAND USE MITIGATION POLICY AND PLAN NEGOTIATED BY THE LANDOWNER ADVISORY BOARD. A BOARD, I MIGHT ADD, THAT IS MADE UP OF MEMBERS RECRUITED BY DM&E PRESIDENT, KEVIN SCHIEFFER, AND ALL OPENLY IN FAVOR OF THE RAILROAD. I AM NOT, NOR HAVE I EVEN BEEN, IN FAVOR OF THE RAILROAD. HOW DOES THIS BOARD PROPERLY REPRESENT MY INTERESTS? THE ONLY PARTIES RECEIVING A COPY OF THEIR POLICY WERE THE ONES WHO SIGNED AN AGREEMENT WITH DM&E TO HAVE THEIR LAND APPRAISED. OBVIOUSLY, LANDOWNERS UNWILLING TO SELL WERE TREATED VERY PREJUDICIALLY. WHY DIDN'T THE DEIS INFORM LANDOWNERS OF THE SOUTH DAKOTA STATE LAWS PERTAINING TO MITIGATION?

IT IS MY UNDERSTANDING THAT THE DRAFT EIS WAS TO CONSIDER ANY PALEONTOLOGICAL OR ARCHAEOLOGICAL ARTIFACTS, AND ENDANGERED OR THREATENED ANIMALS AND PLANTS. PERSONALLY, WE WERE NEVER CONTACTED, NOR HAS ANYONE ELSE WE KNOW BEEN CONTACTED, BY ANY OFFICIAL ASKING TO ANALYZE OUR LAND TO LOOK FOR THE PRESENCE OF THESE ITEMS. WITH SO MUCH EMPHASIS BEING PLACED ON SUCH ARTIFACTS AND ON OUR ENVIRONMENT THESE DAYS, WHY WEREN'T THESE ITEMS FULLY ADDRESSED? HOW CAN WE PRESERVE OUR HISTORY AND OUR ENDANGERED SPECIES WHEN A RAILROAD IS ALLOWED TO BUILD OVER THE TOP OF THEM WITHOUT EVER CONSIDERING THEIR WORTH OR QUITE LIKELY, THEIR DESTRUCTION. HOW CAN YOU PROTECT THESE VALUABLE ADDITIONS TO OUR SOCIETY WHEN YOU DID NOT EVEN TAKE THE TIME TO LOOK FOR THEM?

AGRICULTURE IS THE LEADING INDUSTRY IN THE STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA. HOWEVER, IN THE DRAFT EIS, WE RECEIVED VERY LITTLE CONSIDERATION. WE ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR FEEDING THE NATION AND BEING GOOD STEWARDS OF THE LAND AND YET, OUR CONCERNS OVER THE PROBLEMS THE RAILROAD WOULD CAUSE OUR OPERATIONS ARE DISMISSED AS UNIMPORTANT. WE ARE NOT EVEN CONSIDERED A BUSINESS! THE RAILROAD WILL HAVE A HUGE IMPACT ON OUR OPERATION IN TERMS OF INCREASED MAN HOJRS, AVAILABILITY OF

FEED AND WATER FOR OUR LIVESTOCK, INCREASED RISK OF FIRE, PROBLEMS CROSSING THE TRACKS, AND POSSIBLE INJURY TO LIVESTOCK. THESE ARE NOT MERELY INCONVENIENT IMPACTS, BUT WILL DRAMATICALLY INCREASE OUR EXPENSES.

HOW CAN YOU BASE A DOCUMENT ON WHAT IS "ASSUMED" OR WHAT "DM&E SAYS"? SINCE WHEN, HAS DM&E BECOME AN ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORITY? LOOKING AT THEIR PAST RECORD, IT SEEMS THEY ARE JUST THE OPPOSITE. OBVIOUSLY, MUCH OF THE DOCUMENT WAS DRAWN UP IN AN OFFICE RATHER THAN TRAVELING THE AFFECTED AREAS AND TAKING INTO ACCOUNT EACH UNIQUE AREA. THE ANALYSIS LACKS FACTUAL DOCUMENTATION AND IS INSTEAD WRITTEN WITH UNSUBSTANTIATED CLAIMS AND ASSUMPTIONS. HOW CAN YOU DEEM THIS A COMPLETE STUDY WHEN SO MANY ITEMS WERE NOT ADDRESSED?

HOW CAN BUILDING A RAILROAD ACROSS THUNDER BASIN AND BUFFALO GAP NATIONAL GRASSLANDS BE A NON-SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WHEN IT WILL DISTURB ALL OF THE WILDLIFE AND NATURAL SCENERY. THIS RAILROAD WILL CHANGE THE NATURAL LANDSCAPE, CREATE A LOT OF NOISE, AND INHIBIT OR TERMINATE MIGRATORY PATTERNS AND NATURAL WATERSHEDS. HOW DOES THE RAILROAD FIT INTO THE CURRENT NATIONAL FOREST SERVICE'S PLAN TO CREATE MORE WILDERNESS AND SCENIC AREAS?

WHY AREN'T THE ADDED COSTS INVOLVED WITH THIS RAILROAD INCLUDED IN THIS STUDY? SURELY, THE FINANCIAL IMPACT COUNTIES WILL BE BURDENED WITH SHOULD BE GIVEN MENTION. THIS STUDY BOASTS OF UNSUBSTANTIATED CLAIMS OF ECONOMIC BENEFITS BUT CONVENIENTLY SKIRTS AROUND THE CONNECTED EXPENSES.

CLEARLY THE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT IS AT BEST, HARD TO UNDERSTAND, NOT BASED ON CLEAR FACTS, LACKING THOROUGH ANALYSIS, ABSENT OF FINAL DESIGN INFORMATION AND PERTINENT IMPACTS, AND BIASED IN FAVOR OF THE RAILROAD. AT THE VERY LEAST, WE NEED MORE TIME TO REVIEW THIS DRAFT, TO MAKE FURTHER COMMENTS, AND TO HAVE A MORE THOROUGH STUDY CONDUCTED. PLEASE DO NOT MAKE A MOCKERY OF THIS PUBLIC PROCESS BY IGNORING OUR VALID QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS. THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME.

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