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November 2, 2000

ENVIRONMENTAL
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Office of the Secretary
Case Control Unit
STB Finance Docket No. 33407
Surface Transportation Board
1925 K Street N.W.
Washington, DC 20423-0001



Dear Surface Transportation Board:

This is a comment relating to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Dakota, Minnesota & Eastern Railroad Corporation's (DM & E) proposed rail line construction into Wyoming's Powder River Basin.

Black Hills Community Development, Inc. is a regional economic development organization that represents thirteen (13) community economic development groups. Members of Black Hills Community Development, Inc.'s Board of Directors include representatives from:

Belle Fourche	Lead
Central City	Newell
Custer	Rapid City
Deadwood	Spearfish
Edgemont	Sturgis
Hill City	Whitewood
Hot Springs	

The Board of Directors for Black Hills Community Development, Inc. supports the proposed rail line construction for the following reasons:

- 1) The project will have a significant economic impact for western South Dakota and eastern Wyoming. The massive construction project will infuse in excess of \$300 million into the economy and employ up to 2,500 people throughout the course of the construction.

These jobs would lessen the severity of recent economic tragedies such as the Homestake Mining closure announcement in Lead and the recent shutdown of the Pope & Talbot sawmill in Newcastle, Wyoming. There is an urgent need to replace mining and timber-related jobs in the Black Hills region.

- 2) Second, the proposed rail line construction project will create a wide array of opportunities for local residents, particularly to those closest to the project, for entrepreneurship. These business opportunities can greatly diversify the economy and help economically sustain and strengthen the region.
- 3) Third, the long-term effect of more permanent jobs for the region will expand the tax base and expand the business base.

In relation to the alternatives for the proposed new rail line construction in Wyoming and western South Dakota, Black Hills Community Development, Inc. concurs with the Board's Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) that No-Action Alternative (Alternative A) could have substantial and significant adverse impacts to the human and natural environment. We agree that the No-Action Alternative would pose safety impacts, both rail and highway, and economic impacts to rail shippers along the existing rail line as well as potentially to the regional agricultural economy.

We urge that **Alternative A** not be considered.

Additionally, since **Alternative D** would bring trains closer to populated areas, it would have a highly significant impact on safety. Therefore, we recommend that this alternative not be considered.

Thank you for doubling the amount of time for public comment and recommend that this process move forward in a timely fashion.

Sincerely,



James L. Doolittle
Executive Director

c: Board of Directors
Black Hills Community Development, Inc.