

21 November 2000

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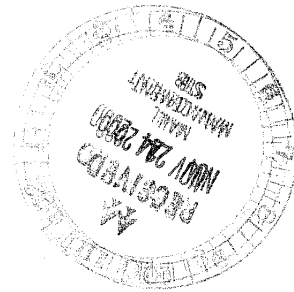
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Surface Transportation Board
Office of the Secretary
Case Control Unit
Att: STB FD#33407
1925 K St. NW
Washington, DC 20423-0001
Attention: Victoria Rutson, Environmental Project Manager

ENTERED
Office of the Secretary

DEC 07 2000

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Public Record



Dear Ms. Rutson:

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT

A Draft Environmental Impact Study (DEIS) concerning the Powder River Basin Expansion Project of the DM&E Railroad was recently completed. As it relates to the trackage in the Mankato area, the DEIS concluded that the environmentally preferred route is the alternative M-2 route, commonly referred to as the Southern By-Pass Route.

This is a very controversial recommendation, and I would like to share my opinion with you and the Surface Transportation Board.

This proposed Southern-By-Pass Route would close Mount Kato Ski Area, a valuable winter recreation destination. The ski area serves not only the greater Mankato-North Mankato area, but also many groups and families from Iowa, South Dakota, Wisconsin and Nebraska who enjoy the wholesome sport of skiing.

What happens to Mankato's Junior Race Team and High School Ski Team? There is no other place for them to train. Do we deny our youth this opportunity?

It is not unusual to see three and four generations of the same families enjoying the winter recreation provided by Mount Kato. Skiers from 3 to 70 plus years of age utilize this facility. Don't deny us this intergenerational experience.

Innkeepers, Restaurants and Shopping Centers in the Mankato-North Mankato community would feel the economic impact of closing Mount Kato.

Mount Kato owners, management and staff are responsible, concerned corporate citizens. Each year Mount Kato sponsors a Ski for Echo event, collecting non-perishable food for our local food shelf. The ski area sponsors the Junior Race Team and assists in sponsorship of the High School Ski Team. Mount Kato provides the skiing experience at cost for 5th and 6th grade students throughout the region every year.

My family has enjoyed Mount Kato (formerly Ski Haven) for forty (40) years. I would be remiss if I sat back and did nothing to ensure the survival of this winter recreation area for future generations.

Regards,

Elaine L. Peterson
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Lake Crystal, MN 56055
507-726-2857

pc: Congressman Gil Gutknecht
Senator Paul Wellstone
Senator Elect Mark Dayton
Blue Earth County Commissioners
DM & E Railroad Corporation