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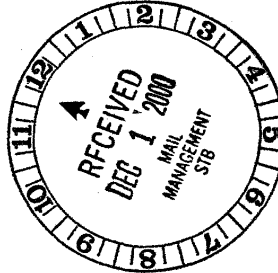
N.U.Q.Q.
NEW ULM QUARTZITE QUARRIES

CRUSHED AGGREGATES
CHERRYSTONE POULTRY GRIT

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Office of the Secretary

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November 15, 2000

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

RE: Letter in Support of the Draft EIS, DM & E Powder River Basin Rebuild Project.

My Name is Jeff Carlstrom and I am the General Manager of New Ulm Quartzite Quarries, Inc. of New Ulm, Minnesota. We are an aggregate producer and have a rail spur located on our production site in New Ulm. We are a shipper on the D.M. & E. Railroad. We currently ship crushed aggregate products to places like Des Moines and Cedar Falls, Iowa.

Speaking as a shipper on the D.M. & E., we regard the rebuild proposal as an unprecedented opportunity to greatly improve the carrying capacity of this railroad.

We are strong proponents of rail transportation and see the rail freight option as the best long term solution to an increasingly encumbered, public supported road system. We are not alone. Each year we send over 15,000 truck loads of rock onto increasingly congested highways. Many of these over-the-road shipments could be handled more safely and economically over rail.

In support of our position we would like to make the following points:

1.) The PRB Expansion project is the largest railroad construction proposal ever to be presented in front of the Board. Your decision will firmly establish the future course that we as a nation will take in addressing the burgeoning needs of surface transportation in this country. The Board has preliminarily concluded that the Project can meet an acceptable standard of operation for unit coal trains. In that light, and given the enormity and importance of this proposal your actions will establish an inviolable precedent. We believe that to deny this railroad the ability to capitalize on the potential inherent in its existing corridors would send a powerful message that revitalization of our nation's railroads is at best an ugly and perilous proposition. A no build decision would by default adjudicate that our existing high volume rail corridors shall remain the only alternative to the expansion of rail freight capacity in the U.S. A no build decision would also presage the notion that our highway systems, at whatever traffic volume levels, and wherever situated - remain the only environmentally sound and politically correct solution to building out our nation's ground based surface transportation systems.

**ENVIRONMENTAL
DOCUMENT**

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Letter to the STB
DM & E - PRB Expansion Proposal
New Ulm Quartzite Quarries, Inc.
November 15, 2000

2.) Denial of the project based on the environmental impacts associated with rail traffic volume, could in the future, become a frequently referenced precedent by railroad opponents, placing our nation's railroad industry on a slippery slope when confronted with challenges by communities experiencing incremental traffic volume increases along their existing cross town tracks.

3.) And in fact if the DM & E application were to be denied, coal train traffic volume increases would be the outcome for the other communities along existing east bound PRB routes.

4.) And finally consider that it may not be unreasonable to assume that the DM & E / Union Pacific joint corridor through Mankato may eventually experience exponential traffic volume growth even without the coal trains. Rail freight measured in ton miles has been increasing at a rate of 5-1/2% per year for the past several years; a rate greater than the expansion of our economy.

Our nation's railroads are poised to rebuild thousands of miles of track throughout the United States in an effort to keep up with these growing volumes of freight traffic. A failure to act in the affirmative on this proposal will only foster uncertainty and thereby exasperate future conflicts between railroads, seeking to upgrade their physical plant, and adjoining property owners.

I urge you to allow this important project to proceed on schedule. We believe the DEIS does in fact cover all of the issues and in our view an extension of the 90 day comment period would be unwarranted. Thank you.



By Jeffrey Carlstrom
For New Ulm Quartzite Quarries, Inc.
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