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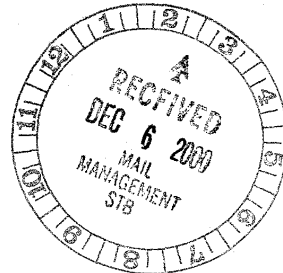
November 27, 2000

Ms. Victoria Rutson
Environmental Project Manager
Surface Transportation Board
1925 K Street, NW
Washington, DC 20423-0001

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Office of the Secretary

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Re: DM&E Powder River Basin Expansion Project

Dear Ms. Rutson:

You are to be commended for your efforts in holding the public hearings regarding the DM&E project. Your patience and apparent real interest in what was being said must have been very difficult in some instances. As an ex-public official who held hearings at the local level, I surely sympathize with you.

After leaving the STB public hearing in Rochester, MN on November 16th I had a few thoughts that I would like to share with you.

As was stated in the Executive Summary of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, "The PRB Expansion Project is the largest and most challenging construction proposal ever before the Board." Please recognize that this is so, and give the project, the EIS, and everything related to it the time and effort that is required to do the project justice.

I say this because it was apparent from the testimony at the public hearing that the information provided to the Board by the DM&E was extremely flawed, incomplete, and possibly inaccurate. All data provided by the DM&E should be double-checked within the railroad industry instead of relying on their self-serving misstatements.

The DEIS itself is widely flawed, also. The hearing raised many very obvious situations that should have been addressed in the statement. Air Pollution, traffic rerouting, underlying rock geology, surface water infiltration, and farming operation disruption are a few of the basic impacts that should have received much study in the Rochester area. If this is typical of the study of the balance of the route from Minnesota to the coal fields the whole report is less than worthless.

I seriously suggest that you refer the total DEIS back to the consulting engineers who provided you with such a woefully incomplete document. If you paid for a draft environmental impact statement, you should have received a true statement, totally researched and discussed. If they took two years to prepare this inadequate document, you did not get your money's worth.

Good luck as you proceed forward with this most difficult task.

Sincerely,

Duane R. Miedtke

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