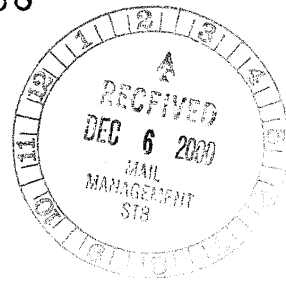


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SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
Section of Environmental Analysis

DM&E Powder River Basin Expansion Project
Draft Environmental Impact Statement
Comment Sheet



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The information in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement clearly shows that the impact of the DM&E project will be a detriment to the environment. The negative impacts on the environment far outweigh the pseudo positive impacts that are listed. There can be no reason that the Surface Transportation Board can make any decision other than to adopt Alternative A, the No-Action Alternative.

First of all, the information provided by the DM&E in their application is flawed. Before any of the DM&E data is accepted, it should all be validated with information from the railroad industry and actual on-site investigation, if necessary.

For instance:

- DM&E indicates that there are currently three trains per day through Rochester, MN. This is an overstatement.
- DM&E does not have trackage to the Eastern coal markets and will have to move the coal from Minnesota on other rail lines. Why not put the coal on the other rail lines that now haul out of the mine?
- To allow the DM&E to enter the coal haul business "to increase competition" does not make sense when the major rail lines in the United States are given permission to merge "to remain competitive".

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement does not address many issues to the depth required. The draft should be sent back to the consulting engineers to be totally reevaluated by addressing all of the major issues that they neglected to note. Many more negative impacts will be identified, then.

For instance:

- The increase in air pollution from the diesel locomotives passing through or around Rochester will greatly increase the amount of pollution existing in the Rochester area where it is already a non-attainment area for air quality.
- The automobile traffic when blocked by unit-trains at the Rochester grade crossings will divert to Highway 52, which has an overpass. This highway is already overloaded, and due for upgrade. This diverted traffic will further overload the highway. This same argument would hold for Highway 63, if a bypass were installed.
- The sub-surface geology in Southeastern Minnesota is composed of fragmented limestone rock with sinkholes. This is the source of the drinking water for all of the area. Major construction will contaminate this source, as will diesel oil spills and hazardous chemical spills. This geological formation should not be pierced.

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