

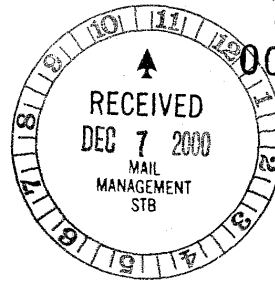
December 3, 2000

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 12 2000**

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**Public Record**



Dear Ms. Rutson:

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.

Since January 1998, the DM&E Railroad staff and the City Council of Mankato have been discussing routing the trackage through Mankato or through a Northern By Pass through Nicollet County or through a Southern By Pass. In all publications and discussions regarding the matter, the Southern By Pass Route was always referred to as being south of the new Blue Earth County Highway #90 which was designed and built to route auto and truck traffic around the southern side of Mankato instead of having it come through the city. At no time was it ever mentioned that the Southern By-Pass Route would come anywhere near the city of Skyline let alone through it. No depiction of the Southern By-Pass Route was ever printed in the local newspaper (FREE PRESS) showing any other route for the Southern By Pass until the issue of the FREE PRESS which announced the Board's preference for the Southern By-Pass Route.

From the very beginning of the DM&E'S attempt to persuade Mankato to allow it to lay an additional track through the city, there was no contact made with the Mayor or City Council of Skyline regarding a Southern By-Pass Route that would cut into southwest side of our city. Thus, we were led to believe this "train tracking problem did not involve us!"

About 4.5 years ago, my wife of 47 years and I purchased a beautiful retirement home at 56 Skyline Drive in Skyline, Minnesota. We paid an executive-level price for the home and have expended an additional sum in excess of \$50,000 to update and improve the home and grounds. This past week we learned four homes on our cul-de-sac at the very end of Skyline Drive had been chosen for purchase by DM&E. If DM&E is allowed to proceed with jamming this Southern By-Pass Route through our side of Skyline, it will completely devastate the residents of Skyline and it will destroy my and my wife's ability to live within less than 75 yards of a continual stream of diesel powered locomotives pulling 100-car trains loaded with coal. Ours homes will not be suitable for living in and we will be unable to sell them. In addition, I am an asthmatic who also has bronchiectasis. Both of these lung diseases can be fatal and the increased threat to my lungs posed by heavy concentrations of coal dust and the carcinogenic by products of burned diesel fuel almost ensure an early death for me.

The city of Skyline, Minnesota, would suffer irreparable damage and the environment would be ravished beyond repair. Our two city wells would likely be infiltrated with the products of erosion caused by clear cutting the timber on Skyline Hill and by the cutting away of the banks to accommodate a train track. The clay subsoil of our hill would erode at a rate that could not be stopped. The Blue Earth River would be contaminated with run off and the residues of diesel fuel combustion. Small lakes at the foot of Skyline Hill would also be lost as would the wetlands below the hill. It is my understanding that we Americans are trying to save and replenish our wetlands--not destroy them as this rail line through Skyline Hill would do.

We would greatly appreciate your help and the help of the entire board in stopping the DM&E Railroad Company from its wanton destruction of the city of Skyline, Minnesota, and surrounding environs as well as stopping the psychological and financial terror they have visited upon its residents

Brendan G. Coleman, 56 Skyline Drive, Skyline, Minnesota 56001-1925

**ENVIRONMENTAL**  
**DOCUMENT**