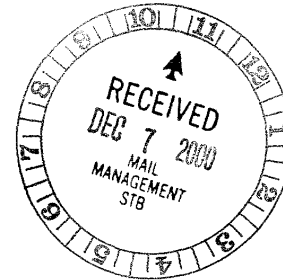


Joel D. Jensen

219 East Skyline Court
Mankato, MN 56001

(507) 388-5633
jdjensen@bresnanlink.net

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November 22, 2000

Surface Transportation Board
Office of the Secretary
Case Control Unit
Attn: STB FD#33407
1925 K Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20423-0001

ENTERED
Office of the Secretary

DEC 12 2000

Part of
Public Record

Attention: Victoria Rutson, Environmental Project Manager

Dear Ms. Rutson:

A Draft Environmental Impact Study (DEIS) concerning the Powder River Basin Expansion Project 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. As the M-2 route would have a cumulative effect not only on wetlands but also on fish and wildlife, aesthetics, and cultural values, this has become a controversial request, and I would like to share my opinion with you.

The primary reason we selected our present residence is that it is surrounded by beautiful scenery that consists of many natural wonders. Rarely does a day pass where we do not witness the inspiring sight of a bald eagle in flight. We have herds of deer that regular visit our yard as do an enormous variety of birds. Do to the stressful nature of life today; our home and community are a quiet respite from the hectic lives we lead.

In addition to my personal concerns, I think of my daughter and granddaughter. They will already be inheriting environmental damage caused, indirectly, by my generation and the generations that preceded us. We need to preserve any and all waters and wetlands within this state and within our country. We should certainly not destroy the natural beauty and the flora and fauna of such pristine areas so that one company can profit—They win financially while the population here loses culturally.

I am also concerned that such an undertaking can be even considered when our City of Skyline only learned two weeks ago that a railroad was planned through our city—and it was an area resident that informed us, not any regulatory body! I was stunned to learn that this project would involve destroying residences in our city and involve such a large disruption of natural waters and wetlands.

Interestingly, I am an avid "Railfan" and enjoy watching, riding and studying my favorite form of transportation. However, I find myself in the unusual situation of writing my first ever letter to the esteemed STB to oppose any and all consideration of the southern by-pass route (M2) in the Mankato and Skyline area due to overwhelming environmental, aesthetic and cultural concerns.

Respectfully,

Joel D. Jensen
Proud resident of Skyline, Minnesota

ENVIRONMENTAL
DOCUMENT