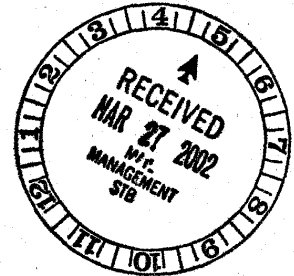




MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

205087



December 14, 2001

Ms. Victoria Rutsen
Office of the Secretary
Case Control Unit - Docket No. 33407
Surface Transportation Board
1925 K Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20423-0001

ENTERED
Office of the Secretary

MAR 28 2002

Part of
Public Record

RE: Powder River Basin Expansion Project
Dakota, Minnesota & Eastern Railroad
SHPO Number: 1998-2893

Dear Ms. Rutsen:

Since we have had trouble connecting by telephone over the last few weeks, I am writing to indicate that we have reservations about signing the proposed Programmatic Agreement for the above referenced undertaking.

Our concerns were basically outlined in our letter of 2 March 2001 (copy enclosed). We continue to believe that there is confusion among members of the public with regard to the cultural resource issues for the project. We would prefer that a public meeting be held in cooperation with the agency and the project sponsor to specifically discuss the Section 106 issues of the project. If this does not seem feasible, we will need to schedule some additional meetings with interested parties to assure that various views are taken into account before we agree to the terms.

We are also very concerned that the process outlined in the PA delays identification/evaluation of resources and/or evaluation of effects to a point where avoidance of adverse impacts on resources is not possible. This is a particular concern with regard to the historic railroad bridges along the line. In fact, these bridges were named as one of the ten most endangered properties in the state by the statewide Preservation Alliance of Minnesota last spring. Agreeing to a memorandum that may effectively narrow alternatives without additional public input and discussion does not seem appropriate.

We look forward to working with the various parties to attempt to address these issues. Contact us at 651-296-5462 with questions or concerns. Please refer to the SHPO Number above in any correspondence.

Sincerely,

Kelly Dagg-Johnson
Dennis A. Gimmestad
Government Programs and Compliance Officer

cc: Joe Yanta, COE
Dan Shinn, Burns and McDonnell
Carol Gleichman, ACHP-Denver
Robert Frame, Preservation Alliance
Mark Peterson, Winona County Historical Society

Enc: SHPO letter of 2 March 2001