



215031

RECEIVED
SURFACE TRANSPORTATION
BOARD

2005 OCT 14 P 2: 29

DOUG STERBENZ
Senior Vice President
Generation & Marketing

OFFICE OF CHAIRMAN
NOBER

October 12, 2005

The Honorable Roger P. Nober
Chairman, Surface Transportation Board
1925 K Street NW
Washington, DC 20423-0001

ENTERED
Office of Proceedings

OCT 24 2005

Part of
Public Record

Re: Railroad expansion to meet future demand growth.

Dear Chairman Nober:

Westar Energy, an electric utility headquartered in Topeka, Kansas, employs about 2,000 people and serves more than 650,000 customers in much of east and east-central Kansas. Our energy centers generate more than 6,000 megawatts of electricity, and we operate and coordinate 33,000 miles of transmission and distribution lines.

Westar Energy has a fleet of 1,985 owned or leased rail cars that annually deliver over 13 million tons of PRB coal to our coal-fired energy centers. Nearly 85 percent of our annual electrical energy production is from power plants fueled by PRB coal. Unfortunately, this year we experienced several unexpected situations that resulted in us receiving inadequate deliveries of coal. These lack of deliveries are negatively impacting the performance of our company.

There were numerous reasons for the reduction in coal deliveries. One has been the need for additional rail infrastructure to meet the increase in demand for PRB coal. The United States needs additional rail capacity built soon to meet the growing demand for PRB coal from the mine's existing customers, for those desiring to switch to a more economical and lower pollutant coal source and to meet new coal-fired generation, currently under construction. We, like others in our region, are starting to plan for future resources that will also use PRB coal thereby compounding this increase in demand.

818 South Kansas Avenue / P.O. Box 889 / Topeka, Kansas 66601
Telephone: (785) 575-8174 / Fax: (785) 575-8173
2 Way Pager: dsterbenz@imcingular.com / Mobile: (785) 845-7593
Email: doug_sterbenz@wr.com

Westar Energy is requesting that the Surface Transportation Board promote a federal regulatory policy that does not inhibit the railroads from making the necessary investments to expand their rail infrastructure to accommodate the forecasted demand growth across the coal and other sectors of their industries. A strong and vibrant rail infrastructure is vital to our company's success in meeting our customer's energy needs.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Doug Steinberg mm