

E1-1514
vjv

802 Sierra Lane NE
Rochester, MN 55906

May 28, 2005

Case Control Unit
Finance Docket No. 33407
Surface Transportation Board
1925 K Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20423-0001

2005 JUN -3 4:11:00

SURF
TRANSPORTATION BOARD

Please seriously consider my comments on STB's decisions relating to the 4 remanded issues concerning the DM&E coal train expansion:

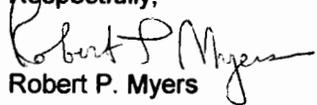
1. **Horn noise-** Maximum horn noise is reported to be 110 db, more than high enough to damage hearing, and certainly high enough to cause daily irritation to thousands of people. Average noise per 24 hours of 70 db is a completely nonsensical method to estimate environmental impact. Furthermore, it has been estimated to cost \$4.5m to insulate the 1,100 homes and 200 businesses in Rochester that would be affected, and the drop in value of these properties without insulation is estimated to be \$7.6m. This is unacceptable. STB impact study was based on the 1990 census and should have been based on the 2000 census!

2. **Noise and Vibration Synergies-** The Mayo Clinic believes vibration will detrimentally affect their MRI machines. The Clinic Staff are the most informed people on this issue. Plus, there is a new, huge Clinic Gonda building, another synergy target, which is four blocks from the tracks.

3. **Air quality-** It's nice that *national* air quality will not be significantly diminished by the additional coal burned due to the DM&E expansion, but irrelevant to people living downwind of the coal-burning energy plants. If STB doesn't have specific information on where the additional coal would be burned, then STB doesn't have enough information to talk about *regional* air quality. The air quality in Rochester will certainly be diminished, due to coal dust blowing off the train cars, and fumes from train engines.

4. **-Programmatic Agreement Governing Historic Review-** If this includes environmental justice, then please reconsider STB's decisions regarding the discriminatory effect of the train affecting the abundant number of lower income people living nearer the train tracks, an important issue that STB invoked for the Houston case in 2003 , but failed in a consistent manner to apply to Rochester's plight. If STB applied the same reasoning as in the Houston case, STB would have helped the poor people of Rochester, many of whom will be affected including 4 high rises of elderly retirees that are in close proximity to the tracks. Where is STB compassion?

I trust that others will make other arguments that I have missed, and I sincerely hope that STB will look at the whole picture instead of just the remanded issues. There is no constructive gain for Rochester, a city of 89,000, in having up to a projected 40 coal trains speeding through the city center on a daily basis. The DM&E has purchased, to Rochester's west, an alternative track route south into Iowa from Owatonna, which could be used to bypass Rochester completely. If the STB has not made a site visit to Rochester, it is remiss in not doing so. The STB just might conclude how unnecessary and destructive the DM&E project really will be to the people of Rochester.

Respectfully,

Robert P. Myers