



EI-7228

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MINNESOTA HISTORIC SOCIETY

State Historic Preservation Office

April 29, 2008

Mr. Kenneth Blodgett
Project Manager
Surface Transportation Board
Patriots Plaza
395 E Street SW
Washington, D C. 20423

Re Itasca Regional Rail Authority - Construction of a 9 mile line of railroad
Minnesota Steel Industries, Butler Taconite Mine Reactivation
Itasca County
SHPO Number 2005-2320PA

Dear Mr. Blodgett

Thank you for forwarding a copy of the Environmental Assessment for the above referenced project

The discussion of Cultural Resource issues on pages 3-6 and 4-10 accurately describes the initiative to incorporate the STB's Section 106 responsibilities into the Programmatic Agreement for the project that has been developed by the U S, Army Corps of Engineers. By way of an amendment to the USAGE'S agreement, this approach should facilitate an integrated program to address cultural resource issues

We note that portions of the above-referenced sections of the EA may be somewhat misleading. Previously identified historic properties are acknowledged, the discussion leaves the impression that the project will have no effect on any cultural resources. If that were the case, no further work or agreement would be needed. Indeed, the above referenced Programmatic Agreement addresses the fact that there may be other historic properties in the area, and it outlines a strategy for identification, evaluation, and treatment.

We look forward to working with the STB and the USAGE in the completion of the terms of the agreement. Contact us at 651-259-3456 with questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Dennis A. Gimmestad
Government Programs & Compliance Officer