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DM&E POWDER RIVER BASIN EXPANSION PROJECT DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

I'm writing to voice my concerns against the DM&E railroad building a new line on the north side of County Rd 90.

This would destroy the very purpose and some of the many advantages this southern by-pass offers residents.

Quick access for businesses reaching their customers, employees going to work, students getting to school, customers shopping or doing business in Mankato area plus recreational activities.

There are many reasons not to locate tracks north of Co. Rd 90. Number one is it would hurt Mankato economically.

We already have one set of tracks going through the Mankato area. Going on the north side of Co. Rd 90 will result in another. If the road is needed, put it on the south side away from the city, highways and residents.

The north side of Co. Rd 90 is needed for future residential growth and expansion.

The Mankato State College is only a short distance north of this southern by-pass. Some of the area south of the college has been approved by the City of Mankato for residential development and expansion.

Some newer sub-divisions have already been built. Other sub-divisions are being built or added on and new homes are going up. Peace, quiet and the tranquility of this urban setting would be lost.

Will the DM&E railroad reimburse these new residents if any suffer losses incurred because of reduced real estate values?

New Co. Rd 90, better known as Mankato's southern by-pass, is a beautiful and scenic road with a bike path on the north side. Do we want to destroy this?

As all energy costs continue to go up, future generations will be forced into lower cost alternatives for recreation and physical exercise. Bike paths will be more common place in the future. The railroad on the north side will ruin this for future generations.

The quick access provided by Co. Rd. 90 provides many advantages to local business and residents. It benefits everyone in Mankato in the form of lower tax base from prospering businesses, a good employee work base and new residential development.

On Co. Rd 90 quick access is available to the Highways 169, south to Highway 60, east to Highway 14, and north and south to Highway 22. This helps reduce through city traffic.

Locating the tracks on the wrong side (north) of Co. Rd 90 would eliminate many of its present advantages. Residents would be forced into going through some part of Mankato or through the Mankato State College area, adding to safety and traffic congestion.

Mankato's residents going south to Co. Rd 90 would be forced to stop at crossings and wait and wait. Turning off their vehicle's engine and waiting some more.

Estimated delays for each train could be at least 15 minutes or more, depending on speed and number of cars. What will happen at all these crossings when the area is going through a blizzard with snow white outs or poor visibility from fog?

It appears the present DM&E proposal is just a cheap patch-up job for a rail right of way they don't own. It never will be a first class high speed efficient train unless it can avoid cities completely.

To build a new high speed efficient transportation system it would be necessary to build along Interstate highways - like Interstate 90 near the Iowa and Minnesota border in the heart of corn and soybean country with wide open spaces and flat land. Locating the tracks on the north side of Co. Rd 90 will not be good for the city of Mankato as it affects the lives of too many people and the entire community as a growing southern Minnesota retail hub and tourism center.

The present proposal will destroy Mankato and all the costs and work effort it took to get here - where we are today.

Millions of dollars and man hours have come from devoted Mankato businesses, people, local governments and organizations to make our city and community one we can be proud of. Should we be expected or forced into throwing this all down the drain?

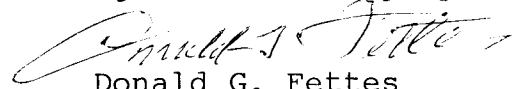
There is no question more time is needed and an extension should be in order because of the importance and the many lives affected. I am requesting a minimum of six months to one year. There still is confusion on best location.

1. The first location was several miles north of Mankato crossing 169 No. and the Minnesota River in wide open country.
2. The second location was through the city route near Union Pacific's present tracks.
3. The third was south of Co. Rd. 90. This would have the least affect on the the new by-pass, Mankato and its residents.
4. The fourth, or latest proposal, wants to locate the rail north of Co. Rd. 90 which I feel would be a terrible mistake and have the most negative impact.

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It is true, long term we need a better plan by the Federal government to develop a high speed rail system where they are all tied together. Where they will avoid towns and cities altogether not just go through them as this plan proposes.

I would appreciate your concerns and any help resolving this latest proposal.



Donald G. Fettes
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PS: Background:

I have lived in Mankato since 1965. I grew up with a railroad through our farm and I helped unload farm equipment from rail cars until my early twenties. I also was in business for many years plus I have spent a lot of time traveling in the upper midwest.