

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

500 Lafayette Road • St. Paul, Minnesota • 55155-4025



May 2, 2008

Kenneth Blodgett
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street SW
Washington, DC 20423
Attn: Docket No. FD 34992

Re: Draft Environmental Assessment (Draft EA) for Itasca County Regional Rail Authority's (ICRRA) proposed construction and operation of an approximately 9-mile long rail line

Dear Mr. Blodgett:

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has reviewed the Draft Environmental Assessment (Draft EA) for Itasca County Regional Rail Authority's (ICRRA) proposed construction and operation of an approximately 9-mile long rail line in Itasca County, Minnesota. The DNR is offering the following comments for your consideration.

The Preferred Alternative (Alt. 2) either directly crosses or comes very near the ordinary high water level (OHWL) of three protected waters: the unnamed stream connected to Holman Lake in Section 22; Big Diamond Lake in Section 23 (31-0223P); unnamed lake/tailing basin in Section 9 (31-0105P). The proposed work will require a Public Waters Work Permit if below OHWL in these areas.

Section of Environmental Analysis Recommendations for Mitigation (page ES-11, no. 10)

Once the botanical survey, as described in point no. 10, has been completed, the DNR would like to receive a copy of the report. The address of the officer to receive the report is listed below.

Lisa Joyal, Endangered Species Environmental Review Coordinator lisa.joyal@dnr.state.mn.us
Natural Heritage and Nongame Research Program, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
500 Lafayette Road, Box 25, St. Paul, Minnesota 55155

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the Draft Environmental Assessment and for your consideration of these comments. The DNR looks forward to reviewing responses to comments when they become available. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or comments.

Sincerely yours,

Ronald Wieland, Senior Planner
Environmental Review and Planning Unit
Division of Ecological Resources
(651) 259-5157

cc: Bob Leibfried, Susan Backe, Lisa Joyal, Steve Colvin, Erika Herr, Steve Moberg

ERDB# 20080654-0001

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