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BY E-FILING

Ms. Cynthia Brown
Chief, Section of Administration
Office of Proceedings
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20423-0111

Re: Docket No. EP 724, *United States Rail Service Issues*
Comments of Xcel Energy

Dear Ms. Brown,

This letter provides Xcel Energy's written comments in the above-referenced matter. We request that they be included in the record for the above entitled docket.

Xcel Energy is a combination gas and electric utility serving 3.5 million electric and just under two million natural gas customers in seven states. The undersigned serves as Vice President, Commercial Operations, and one of my responsibilities is to ensure that our electric generating stations have sufficient fuel needed to maintain reliable electric service to our customers.

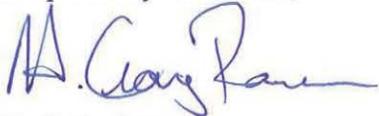
Referenced in the letter to the STB on April 9, 2014, I expressed concern about the poor railroad performance at our Sherco generating facility in Becker, Minnesota. That concern remains today, and has actually expanded to include several of our coal-fired stations in Colorado and Texas, namely the 1,410 MW Comanche station in Colorado and the 1,067 MW Tolk and 1,018 MW Harrington plants in Texas. The BNSF has been delivering approximately 65% of our monthly nominations for these facilities, and cycle times have increased an average of 48% for our Texas-bound trains and 67% for our Colorado-bound trains. To put this in perspective, since July 1, 2014, our Texas inventories have declined by nearly 510,000 tons, and our Colorado inventories at the impacted station have declined by 625,000 tons. Xcel now has two coal-fired stations with inventories even lower than what we have at the Sherco station.

We have continued to reach out to senior management at BNSF and believe that they are actively working to improve their rail service to Xcel Energy. Normally, we would be

expecting to build inventories in the fall in preparation for higher plant production levels in the winter. However, we are concerned that the upcoming large grain harvest will prove to be an additional challenge for the BNSF, and we will be unable to restore our inventories to more normal levels, causing us to enter winter with unsafe levels of coal inventories.

In conclusion, Xcel Energy asks that the Board continue to monitor the pace of BNSF coal deliveries and take any appropriate actions needed to improve deliveries of coal to Xcel and other electric utilities responsible for the reliable operation of the electric grid.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "H. Craig Romer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

H. Craig Romer
On Behalf of
Thomas A. Imbler
Vice President, Commercial Operations