

CHAPTER VIII

IRREVERSIBLE AND IRRETRIEVABLE COMMITMENT OF RESOURCES

The 2,400-acre right-of-way will be irreversibly committed to use as a transportation corridor. Normally, areas which are used for transportation never revert to their former use. Wildlife habitat and grazing values in this area will be irretrievably committed for the rest of time.

The materials used in construction of the railroad (sand, gravel, clinker, limestone, steel, manpower, fuel) will be consumed and lost to other uses. The consumptive use of 185 to 1,075 acre-feet of water during construction will not be available for use by other resources (agriculture, recreation, wildlife).

Operation of the railroad will consume vast quantities of diesel fuel. By 1990 an estimated 41.2 million gallons of diesel fuel will be consumed annually within the study area. This fuel will not be available for use by other means of transportation.

The estimated 161 million tons of coal to be covered by the proposed railroad is not considered an irreversible or irretrievable loss. The coal will not undergo a physical impact and will be available for mining in the future.