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First Apostles' Doctrine Church

Bishop Jack Wisor Ministries

Heaven's Acres Homesteading
IRA Ministry Publications
Pittsburgh Outreach to Homeless
All Welcomed / Non-Denominational

2021

September 12, 2025

Ms. Danielle Gosselin

Ms. Elizabeth Webster

Ms. Karen Stevens

Office of Environmental Analysis

copy to Environmental Comment FD-36833

Surface Transportation Board

395 E Street, S.W.

Washington, DC 20423

Dear Ms. Gosselin, Ms. Webster and Ms. Stevens;

I am writing to remind you again of what I spoke about in the September 10th call about the significant impact a decision to approve Lampwrights LLC application would have on the First Apostles' Doctrine Church and the Just for Jesus Challenge Homeless Outreach Ministry (which is a 501 (c) 3 charitable organization).

I am making the case that providing a church and faith-based homeless outreach with many opportunities for those who need them, with a track record of over 2600 people served in the last quarter century, along with providing community services to the elderly and others in need of assistance, food for the hungry, transportation for those in need, and much more, to our tri-county area and beyond. The church and the ministry continually provides help and assistance to the State Police and local police departments, all of the hospitals and mental health units in the region, Adult Protective Services, Area Agency on Aging, Community Action Agencies in the region, and many other human service agencies. What the church and ministry provides to this community and beyond is far greater "in the public interest" than building a rail line that would help destroy that effort, not to mention all of the other serious harm that building that rail line would result in.

Many of the guests that I have helped over the years, through my homeless outreach ministry, are mentally-challenged. I have been able to provide them with a quality of life that cannot be easily found elsewhere in Pennsylvania. Many of the mentally-challenged have been inmates or addicts who are trying to re-integrate into society.

The church has both indoor worship and outdoor worship facilities on my property that would be negatively impacted by construction of a new rail line and expansion of an existing rail bed right of way. These are permanent facilities, utilized 24/7, 365 days a year. Construction of a new rail line would eliminate the primary access to the property, including my home and both church facilities, along with all

outdoor church fellowship areas that have been created for use of the congregation, denying a home for the homeless and life skills being taught for over 20 years.

It would also eliminate the majority of parking areas for members of the congregation and visitors.

Major expansion work has just been completed on the indoor church, which was to be used until we build our permanent church.

The parsonage that currently houses homeless guests as part of the Just for Jesus Outreach Ministry is the proposed site of the new church that is to be built adjacent to it. This is situated at or near the proposed construction of the rail line, which if approved, would eliminate the building of the new church and disrupt the current use of the parsonage.

The recently completed expansion as well as the plan for building a permanent church now stands in jeopardy depending on the decision that the Board makes in this matter.

Construction of a new rail line would also eliminate the existence of a sawmill I built some years back, to support the need for rough lumber materials for the church and ministry, but more importantly, for a much-needed opportunity to help generate income for the church and ministry, while helping to supply the local community with quality, rough-cut lumber.

I also mentioned to you about the various “shops” on the property that are provided as a way of teaching homeless guests of the ministry important life and job skills – to not just give them practical skills in the employment world, but to give them an important sense of value and self-worth, which pretty much all homeless individuals severely lack.

Access to these shops as well as all of the other areas used for church and ministry purposes will be severely impacted, if not completely eliminated, by a decision to allow this rail line to be constructed. I have been providing this homeless ministry for over 25 years and have provided a home, food, clothing, the necessities of life and truly a chance to set their life on a new path while having an opportunity to connect with Jesus Christ, their Lord and Savior. Over 2600 people have been given this opportunity in the last 25 years.

The 1st Amendment to the U.S. Constitution establishes that “**Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof....**” Additionally, the **Religious Land Use and Institutional Persons Act of 2000** established protections for churches, places of worship and other religious organizations from overly-burdensome land use actions and decisions by all units of government – federal, state and local.

“No government shall impose or implement a land use regulation that:

- A) Totally excludes religious assemblies from a jurisdiction; or
- B) Unreasonably limits religious assemblies, institutions, or structures within a jurisdiction

I believe the information I have provided you in this letter makes a compelling case that a decision by the Surface Transportation Board to approve the application from Lampwrights LLC would definitely result in:

- Denying a congregation their ability to practice their belief and fulfillment of Matthew 25:31-46 to help all people
- Denying homeless people in need from having housing, food, transportation and all of the many benefits and services that they are entitled to from a church and faith-based homeless ministry
- A severe restriction to if not elimination of access to church and homeless ministry buildings, structures and facilities, resulting in a restriction or elimination of the ability to assembly for religious purposes
- Elimination of the church's plan to build a new church adjacent to the existing parsonage
- Elimination of the church and ministry's ability to generate funds from the existing saw mill

There is also another church ¼ mile north of here that would face negative impacts in terms of loss of their parking area for use of their congregants as well as other land use restrictions.

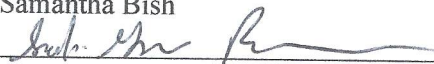
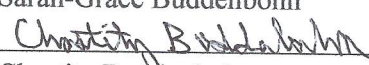
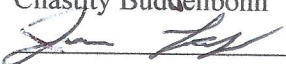
I have enclosed an information packet for you to learn more about the church and ministry that will be allowed to continue and flourish or severely impacted, based on the decision that you make on Lampwrights LLC application.

In closing, I hope that it is convincingly clear that what the church and ministry provides to this community and beyond is far greater "in the public interest" than building a rail line that would help destroy that effort, not to mention all of the other serious harm that building that rail line would result in.

Respectfully,


Bishop Jack Wisor and the
Board of the First Apostles' Doctrine Church

CC: Congressman Glenn Thompson
State Senator Cris Dush
State Rep. Brian Smith
State Rep. Mike Armanini
Elk County Commissioners


Samantha Bish

Sarah-Grace Buddenbohn

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James Lagle