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8218 Cemetery Road, Winnebago, IL 61088 -- Phone 815-963-2261 -- FAX 815-963-3259

Dear Ms. Campbell,

I'm writing to oppose the Great Lakes Basin (GLB) Transportation proposed railroad project. We are deeply concerned of the environmental impact as well as the socioeconomical consequences of this infrastructure.

Our business, Edwards Apple Orchard West, has become an iconic fall-time staple of Northern Illinois. Established in 1988, we now welcome thousands of guests and their families onto the farm each year. With about 8,000 apples trees, we produce our apple cider and make our famous apple cider donuts. We have many activities that include: pick-ur-own apples, pumpkins, and raspberries, petting farm, and children's play area. On site, we have a renovated dairy barn built in 1891 where our customers can purchase our produce, food products and various gift items. Besides our family, we employ 40 seasonal employees.

Most importantly we have 3 children, each one of them has showed interest in continuing on the family tradition. Brian (27) works full-time on the farm learning all the skills and trades of owning a successful business. Kristin (25) is a critical care nurse at a local hospital but still works part-time directing our media and kitchen operations. Kari (22) is finishing up her Bachelors degree in Business Administration and will come back to the farm full-time. They all continue to work hard, day in and day out to aspire to be part owners in the future. We could not be prouder that they all want to be a part of our business.

The proposed GLB Railroad would run through our farm impacting our family, community, and business. We have always looked to expand our business, but that is now halted. A railroad would stop the growth of our business and it would eventually hinder it to a point where we would have to close our doors. The fragile state-line economy would lose another business as well as a loss of income for the community. Are there finances available for lost revenue for the number of generations that will be impacted? The GLB Railroad would drive our family out of the area. Agriculturally, a spill would poison our aquifers and deem our farm-land unlivable for 100's of years. What protection, clean-up, and finances are available for this scenario? Safety is also a concern, we would be using farm-field rail crossings and at-grade crossings. As tillers of our land, we already have a dangerous occupation, we don't need to put ourselves in more harm's way. GLB proposed project offers no benefits and will hinder our business forcing us to close our doors on our customers' fall tradition and our family's future.

I urge you to reject this private-funded transportation project on behalf of our family, business, and community.

Sincerely,

The Edwards Family

Michael, Lynn, Brian, Kristin, & Kari Edwards

Michael, Lynn, Brian, Kristin, Kari

Mike & Lynn Edwards, Owners

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I certify that I have this day served a copy of this document to the Applicant.

Signed: Kristin Edwards