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Dear Surface Transportation Board,

As farmland owners who are potentially in the path of the Great Lakes Basin toll Rail line we have had to rely on Frank Patton's media quotes for financial disclosure information. Unfortunately his quotes have been ever changing in the past five years.

We have heard everything from 90% of the money could come from federal loans to 100% from private investors. We have heard the cost of the rail line vary from \$3 billion to \$3.5 billion to \$6 billion to \$8 billion and now the bargain cost of \$2.8 billion.

Patton promised an application last spring revealing who the mysterious investors were, and here we are a year later with no real financial information. With no real financial information provided, how do we know as citizens that Mr. Patton's investors are not going to abandoned the project midstream because they discovered mitigation of environmental issues, achieving 1% gradient, the goal of being a quiet zone, or any other cost became too much of an obstacle? What cash funds will be available for decommissioning? With no disclosure of any committed railroad to pay for a toll rail line, how can any financial forecasts be realistic?

Fourteen investors have committed to paying for the Environmental Study. Unless EIS bills have not been paid then it seems like there should be openness about where money has come from and where it is going.

Patton promised, "There will be a very extensive public input process as we move forward." The application does not rule out the use of government loans. How can financial information be withheld from public input if GLBT ever uses government funding?

As land purchasers we have always had to disclose to the seller where the money was coming from. With eminent domain, GLBT will be purchasing (without seller consent) about 21,000 acres from hundreds of landowners. Do we, as landowners, have a right to know where the money is coming from? YES!

We are equally amazed that as potentially impacted landowners that our addresses, our emails, our comments are all made public yet the very people whose intentions are to declare eminent domain on our agricultural businesses hide their identities. We can imagine Patton's land acquisition team is already creating databases from the public's filings as they begin to ponder what to offer each of us.

Please do not allow GLBT to hide their investors from public input. We have a right to know who may own our land that often has been in our families for generations.

Respectfully,
Marshall and Julie Newhouse

See below for documentation of the ever-changing finances of Great Lakes Basin Transportation, LLC.

<http://www.chicagobusiness.com/article/20130529/BLOGS02/130529793/plan-floated-for-3-billion-chicago-rail-bypass>

From the above 2013 Heinz article:

“The \$3 billion structure faces all kinds of obstacles, not least among them the fact that the Illiana Expressway still is just a dream. But the idea of getting private investors to put up money that would be repaid by railroads paying charges to use the tracks does have a certain big-picture beauty to it. That would make the line something like a public utility.

And the plan is not inconsistent with a variety of ones offered by local groups through the years. Other funding would come from a federal transit loan program.”

<http://midwestenergynews.com/2014/03/27/could-a-bypass-take-bakken-oil-around-chicago/>

from the above 2014 article

“Patton said his Basin Belt Railroad would be open for all the Class I railroads to use — at a cost. But the project has plenty of its own cost hurdles to slog through first, given a price tag topping \$3.5 billion.

Jim Pehta, marketing adviser for Great Lakes Basin, estimated that nearly 90 percent of the project can be financed through federal railroad loans. Still, some are doubtful the years-old idea will get off the ground.”

<http://www.wifr.com/home/headlines/6-Billion-Railroad-Bypass-Project-283427011.html>

From the above 2014 article:

“A new \$6 billion railroad is planned for Northern Illinois and would include the Rockford area.....The \$6 billion project, which is being paid for with 100% private money, could mean big things for Rockford.”

<http://www.rrstar.com/news/20160227/railroad-project-could-bring-jobs-development-to-rockford-and-miles-of-tracks-through-boone-county>

From the above February, 2016 article:

A team of investors is poised to ask the U.S. Surface Transportation Board this week to build an \$8 billion freight railroad that, if approved, could lift economic development and job creation to new heights in the Rock River Valley.....

Patton won't name the investors behind his team, although he said their identities will be disclosed as soon as this week, when a formal application is submitted to the federal government.

“There will be a very extensive public input process as we move forward,” Patton said. “The Surface Transportation Board requires that, and I can tell you there will be plenty of opportunities for people in Rockford and in Boone County to give us their input. There's no monopoly on wisdom as far as we're concerned.”

Backers of the proposed Great Lakes Basin Railroad say they're poised to file an application for a railroad operator license with the U.S. Surface Transportation Board in Washington D.C., possibly within a matter of days.

http://www.nwitem.com/business/local/frank-patton-not-your-average-rail-baron/article_2696e3d9-f353-5cd1-8665-1699a3771b3e.html

from the above 2016 article:

On March 18, the federal Surface Transportation Board issued a notice of intent that it would prepare an environmental impact statement on the Great Lakes Basin Rail Line. In order to determine the scope of its environmental study, the federal agency scheduled 10 public meetings along the proposed rail route and established a comment period through June 15.

That notice was made possible in part by Great Lakes Basin Transportation Inc. rounding up 14 investors to pay the estimated \$30 million to \$50 million cost of the study.

http://www.daily-journal.com/news/local/residents-continue-protest-against-rail-spur-proposal/article_cfb9b46-7b23-5be8-95ad-741bfc3fb1de.html

From the above May 2016 article

Patton would not answer specifics about investors. He did acknowledge he could gain funding through the Railroad Rehabilitation & Improvement Financing federal fund.

<http://www.railwayage.com/index.php/freight/class-i/software-tycoon-plans-belt-line-around-chicago.html>

From the above 2017 article

The corporation lists 24 investors led by majority shareholder Frank Patton. Patton left Lehman Brothers to found financial software start-up Portfolio Dynamics in 1970, which he sold in 2002. He first proposed a number of years ago a toll road for trucks around Chicago before transitioning to a rail concept.

In 2016 Patton convinced 14 investors to contribute as much as \$50 million to help pay for the STB's environmental study of the proposal, including James Wilson, a former assistant vice president of operations for Santa Fe. Wilson is Vice Chairman of Great Lakes.

Patton in published reports said that he has had discussions with potential railroad partners dating to 2009, but has not disclosed details.

In the filing Great Lakes said construction would require no public funding, and would be paid for mostly through the sale of debt securities. It pegged construction costs at \$2.8 billion.