

FD 35952

GLBT Application

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Landowners, farmers, the entire agricultural industry as well as all the other businesses that feed off agriculture in Illinois, Indiana and Wisconsin are facing an unwarranted railway project/tollway/international airport that touts the use of quick take eminent domain for strictly private gain for a group of investors who for some reason can't seem to show their faces. This project which could not prove viability in and of itself this past year has now attempted to acquire corporate sponsors such as UPS and added a tollway and international airport to the scope of the plan in an attempt to make this project seem more established than it really is. Frank Patton and his group of private investors have spared no expense meeting behind closed doors with elected officials and other potential investors/sponsors rather than making any effort to work with landowners and farmers along the 278 mile route. Frank took a winter break leaving landowners in limbo only to toss a bigger, more outrageous project on the table right at planting season again showing the absolute absence of compassion for area residents impacted by Frank's lack of planning or foresight. Thousands of landowners, farmers, the entire agricultural industry affected by one individual's pipe dream..... sponsored by a group of investors unwilling to identify themselves. Individuals or corporations unwilling to expose themselves.....but more than happy to seize prime agricultural land.....the most precious resources belonging to Illinois, Indiana and Wisconsin citizens, along with the springs and waterways that feed them in these states, and all are nonrenewable. Once destroyed they cannot be replaced.

So why would we leave the welfare of our states most precious resources in the hands of unidentified profiteers who are unwilling to face the scrutiny of those they wish to steal from? Why would the STB willingly protect these individuals/corporations identities and not protect the property rights of the hardworking citizens along the path of this blatantly unnecessary project? Millions of people who stand to lose their homes are living productive lives.....contributing to their communities. These private investor driven projects stand to disrupt the entire agricultural industry that helps feed our nation as well as hundreds of other countries. Why would you shoot the best industry in Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin and quite frankly the entire US in the foot? We have enough money in the budget to subvert laws to procure unnecessary expressways such as Illiana - which already failed once, created the Illiana Expressway Act at taxpayers expense - which again....failed and we watched as it went through the courts at taxpayer expense. The hidden costs.... already in the millions if not billions.....never exposed to the taxpayers and slid under the legislative rug. Yet our legislators fly by night on a never-ending unbalanced budget and vote to take away ag education in our schools for an industry our state pretty much depends on. One of the last few industries offering good jobs to our youth. How ludicrous and shameful. The taxpayers get nothing from elected officials but sink holes where our tax dollars go in and nothing for the good of the public comes back out. And you want to disrupt good productive landowners, farmers and the industries that rely on them in the process. Shame on our state and federal representatives for such a shameful example of leadership.

We have millions of miles of abandoned tracks already in this nation. This country needs our EXISTING infrastructure reinforced, repaired and restored.....we don't need a new financial fiasco tied to the already failed Illiana Expressway. Yet another of Frank Patton's failed dreams. This project he has only invested the past few years in as a legacy for his children and grandchildren.....what about ALL the farmers and landowners that have spent their entire lives building a legacy for their children and grandchildren. Some having been left that legacy from previous generations. A bit more blood, sweat and tears than Frank Patton could ever imagine. The only legacy the GLBT Railway, Tollway and International Airport could possibly leave behind is a trail of mass destruction for thousands of hardworking citizens along its path. Frank Patton's project touts jobs and quick take eminent domain.....both are false statements. His company is not a railroad and does not meet the legal requirements to obtain eminent domain unless some legislative theatrics changes the rules. These tactics are being used to intimidate and coerce and attempt to influence people into believing this project has some kind of value to the community. Job creation for these projects is at the expense of hundreds of thousands of permanent existing jobs that currently sustain the local economies along the route. Railways have recently announced a marked decline in capacity and the existing railroads have voiced their lack of interest in utilizing GLBT due to infrastructure projects already in place addressing congestion through the state of Illinois and around the Chicagoland area. Logistically this project just doesn't add up at all when previously established programs are already working to relieve the issues GLBT states it will address.

We are well aware of the adverse impact this newly expanded project would have on the entire agricultural community along this route...oil and hazardous waste spills, fires and/or explosions causing unnecessary deaths and permanently destroying soil, water and crops. Trains blocking tracks on rural routes leaving people in greater danger and first responders unable to proceed to emergencies. Contrary to some assumptions about people in rural communities.....we don't live by media twist and spin.....we prefer to base our decisions on facts. And the fact of the matter is that nothing, not one single aspect about this project outweighs the benefits, financially or otherwise, we currently enjoy here in our already very productive rural agricultural communities.

And YES.....we would like to know the names of ALL the individuals and/or corporations, foreign or domestic who are investing in this project and attempting to use eminent domain to acquire our privately owned land under the cloak of an order of protection. It would be impossible for any of us to hold ANY of them responsible for damage or failure to follow through with this plan or any financial burden this project could leave as a result of unpaid debt associated with the project. We are asking that the STB deny the order to protect the identities of financial investors in the Great Lakes Basin Railroad project, as well as the tollway and international airport projects directly associated with this proposal. It would be unfair to the public that is directly impacted by this project to conceal the identities of those who would attempt to steal hard earned private properties for strictly private gain through eminent domain. How ethical is it for the STB to expect the taxpayers who would ultimately end up funding this fiasco with the greatest amount to lose....to identify themselves as they voice their opposition to this project...only to have the STB choose NOT to identify those who would stand to profit the most from the violation of hardworking taxpayers' constitutional property rights.

Again....we ask you to reject the request to protect the identity of financial investors behind GLBT and vote for the NO BUILD option on the Great Lakes Basin Railroad/Tollway/International airport project in its entirety.

We appreciate your consideration.

Sincerely,

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