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Joan and Steve Johnson
6412 Montague Road
Rockford IL 61102

Surface Transportation Board

RE: Docket #FD35952

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Part of
Public Record

Dear STB,

Watching the local news we saw a neighbor/farmer being interviewed. This is how we found out that our farmland was being coveted by a millionaire and his Great Lakes Basin Railroad. We are Steve and Joan Johnson and are part owners of 150 acres pristine black dirt that has been in Steve's family since the 1950s, and we are homeowners within 1/10 of a mile of the proposed railroad.

Here is what will happen if the railroad goes through:

1. Most farmers/landowners will losing 10-20% of their land, which means 10-20% of their **income taken away**, plus any future income. A billionaire taking away money from the middle class.
2. The train is cutting property in such a way that the **land will be in triangles**, not rectangles. This will leave these farmers with will be very difficult to farm what they would leave. EVER look from an airplane at farmland....it's rectangular for a reason!!!
3. **Property values will go down**. The train is going to pass on the small piece of farmland between my in-law's home (who live next door to us) and their neighbor. Our 125 year-old-farmhouse (1/10 of a mile from the track) is limestone walls on dirt. What will happen with everyday vibrations to our foundation? We have put close to \$90,000 into our farmhouse over the last 23 years. . Much of which my husband did himself. We'll never recoup that if we have a railroad so close. My in-laws are in 79 and 86. How will they ever sell their home, if they choose to downsize, with a train running behind and next door to them? To add to this I understand there will be an **overpass built in front of our homes**.
4. The potential for permanently **damaging something so pure**. Chances for spills from the freight. Chances of changing water flowage. Loss of hunting land.
5. The possibility of additional usage of the land such as unsightly electrical lines and underground pipelines.

This is impacting our lives and everything we worked hard for. Both of us have put so much of our own work and money into our home and everything we've done will be immediately taken from us.

The ironic part, we don't even get to know who wants the land. They want anonymity. Please let us know who these coveters are.

People say we're holding the land hostage because we're against this. No one understands how one day you think you own something because you purchased it and paid taxes on it, and the next it's being coveted by someone so rich you can't even begin to know where to turn. How is it right to take away the very thing that farmers/landowners need to earn their living?

It is farmland. It needs to stay farmland. Don't take away from people who were just doing their jobs, keeping America fed.

Please, let us know you heard these words.

Sincerely,

Joan and Steve Johnson
6412 Montague Road
Rockford IL 61102