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Congratulations on the new title as Regulatory Reform Officer. As a part time farmer and land owner potentially affected by the proposed Great Lakes Basin Transportation llc bypass around Chicagoland, I see the need for reform in the rail siting procedures and process, specifically 49 CFR 1150. Compared to the procedures for siting Transmission and pipelines, the rail process is severely antiquated.

I do hope the STB is willing to accept the input of the public on such reforms, farmers and landowners in particular as we are the ones most affected, and have seen past abuses and politically motivated misuses of federal eminent domain.

If work groups are created, please consider reaching out to recognized farm organizations, like the American Farm Bureau. If workshops are held, please consider Chicago as we are facing the difficulties of the current process with the proposed Great Lakes Basin Transportation rail project.

Good luck in your endeavor. It appears the current regulatory process is one where the answer is YES or NOT YES. The current siting process is not one that offers much opportunities for a "NO" from the STB. Tongue River is an unfortunate example why rail siting needs reform 35 years in the siting process is about 33 years too long.

As a Northern Illinois 5th generation farmer, I've seen 3 pipelines and one powerline come through the farm. Until recently, our family has not opposed such infrastructure projects, but I fear the potential profits of acquiring easements and flipping the project to real utility companies has made eminent domain projects much more tantalizing to investment capital startups with lower ethical standards. Put simply, eminent domain has become a serious problem in the farm community.

If there is an opportunity to help in developing new siting procedures, there are some off us in the rural community willing to help.

Thank you and good luck.

Scott Thorsen
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