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To: Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street SW
Washington, DEC 20423

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The Catholic Cemeteries of the Diocese of Rockford is opposed to the proposal of the Great Lakes Basin Transportation, Inc., to construct a rail route through Northern Illinois. Catholic Cemeteries cares for cemeteries throughout our Diocese, which includes 11 Northern Illinois counties. This rail route will directly and permanently affect one of these cemeteries, our largest burial ground area in our diocese.

Calvary Cemeteries is located in Winnebago, IL, and has been a cemetery for the past 77 years. With 80 developed acres, and another 80 acres of future development, this cemetery has, does and hopes to continue to bury the deceased here in Northern Illinois for many centuries to come. However, the rail route that is planned will go directly through the future development area and only a short distance from the present burial and mausoleum areas.

If the rail route is built, we will lose our future growth, and be severely hampered in our ability to continue to care for the current cemetery. Funeral processions will be obstructed from coming to the cemetery, since the road in front of the cemetery will be blocked by the railroad. The continuous noise of the trains will make it difficult, if not impossible to conduct services at the gravesites, and since the rail route is only feet from our current office space, making it difficult if not impossible to conduct business.

The Catholic Cemeteries of the Rockford Diocese believes that any benefit projected by this rail project can and will never offset the negative impact on the common good. Therefore, I request as Administrator of Cemeteries for the Diocese of Rockford, that the Surface Transportation Board deny this proposed project from the Great Lakes Basin Transportation, Inc.

Sincerely,

Wayne M. Lenell
Administrator
Catholic Cemeteries
Diocese of Rockford, IL

Cc: Michael W. Blaszk, Esq. Attorney for Applicant
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