



Surface Transportation Board
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The Honorable Richard J. Durbin
United States Senate
711 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Durbin:

Thank you for your recent letter regarding Great Lakes Basin Transportation, Inc.—Rail Construction and Operation—In Rock County, Wisc., Winnebago, Ogle, Lee, LaSalle, Grundy, and Kankakee Counties, Ill., and Lake and Porter Counties, Ind., FD 35952. The Board appreciates knowing your views on this matter.

As you know, on May 1, 2017, Great Lakes Basin Transportation, Inc. (GLBT) filed an application seeking authority from the Surface Transportation Board (Board) to construct and operate an approximately 261-mile rail line around the greater Chicago metropolitan area through several counties in Wisconsin, Illinois, and Indiana. On June 2, 2017, the Board ordered GLBT to submit additional information required under our regulations by June 22, 2017. The Board also suspended the deadlines for comments and granted GLBT's motion for protective order, but required GLBT to file a public version of its list of 10 principal stockholders and their holdings. If, after receiving the additional information, the Board deems the application complete, the agency will publish a notice in the Federal Register that establishes a procedural schedule for the case.

If the application is accepted, the Board's review of the GLBT proposal would consist of two processes. First, the Board would consider the transportation merits under 49 U.S.C. § 10901. Under this statute, the Board must approve a complete application to construct and operate a new railroad line unless it is inconsistent with the public convenience and necessity. As part of the Board's analysis on whether the GLBT proposal meets this standard, the Board would assess whether the GLBT proposal is in the public interest. Second, the Board would consider the environmental impacts under the National Environmental Policy Act and related environmental laws. To do so, the Board would conduct an environmental review process, which would include examination of certain impacts to the surrounding communities, including the impacts on adjacent farmlands. Information on the environmental review of the GLBT proposal can be found on the project website at <http://www.greatlakesbasinraileis.com/>. If the Board determines this application is complete, I assure you that all evidentiary submissions and comments on the merits phase and the environmental review will be carefully and thoroughly considered.

Again, thank you for sharing your views on GLBT's proposal. A copy of your letter has been placed in the docket for this proceeding. If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Lucille Marvin, the Director of the Board's Office of Public Assistance, Governmental Affairs, and Compliance, at (202) 245-0238.

Sincerely,


Ann Begeman
Acting Chairman