

Great Lakes Basin Rail Line EIS – FD 35952

**Agenda for Meeting/Teleconference between OEA and Applicant
Regarding Information Request Number 1**

August 5, 2016, at 11:00 AM (EDT)

Conference Line: 1-877-423-6338; Passcode: 917 143 #

- 1) Purpose of Meeting
- 2) Any Questions from Applicant on Information Request Number 1?
- 3) General status of Applicant's responses to Information Request Number 1
- 4) Other Alternatives Raised in Scoping Comments

**Meeting/Teleconference between OEA and Applicant
Regarding Information Request Number 1
August 5, 2016, at 11:00 AM (EDT)**

Participants

<i>Surface Transportation Board, Office of Environmental Analysis (OEA)</i>	<i>Great Lakes Basin Transportation, Inc. (GLBT)</i>	<i>Venable (outside counsel to GLBT)</i>	<i>ICF International</i>
Ken Blodgett Vicki Rutson Phillis Johnson-Ball Adam Assenza	William Miller Cassandra Wilson Frank Patton Jim Wilson Mike Blaszak	Kathryn Floyd Jay Johnson	Alan Summerville David Bauer Christopher Moelter

Agenda and Notes

- 1) Introductions
- 2) Purpose of Meeting

OEA described its need to develop a reasonable range of alternatives to satisfy NEPA requirements. The goal for the meeting was to discuss the July 5, 2016 information request sent by OEA to GLBT in order to determine if GLBT has questions about the information request. GLBT indicated that it is committed to the alternatives development process and developing alternatives in response to the information request.

- 3) Discussion on Information Request Number 1

The group discussed the potential for alternatives that are generally closer to or farther from Chicago and how this was considered by GLBT in developing their proposed alignment. GLBT indicated that urban density and development were identified as general constraints in alignments closer to Chicago. Alignments farther from Chicago would result in longer routes that would increase the construction and operational costs and have a higher likelihood of environmental impacts. GLBT indicated that the general location of their proposed route was designed as a balance between the closer and the more distant routes and generally follows favorable design topography. GLBT included design objectives to avoid population centers, connect with other railroads, and avoid wetlands.

GLBT noted that the response to the information request will provide an explanation of the alternatives development and screening process that it used, along with information on alternatives to its proposed alignment.

The group discussed how a reasonable range of alternatives would be part of the Final Scope of Study for the EIS and how alternatives dismissed from detailed consideration must be documented in the EIS. The group discussed scoping comments that identify or suggest new alternatives or route deviations. GLBT indicated that it is reviewing scoping comments and considering them for the responses to the information request.

4) Next Steps

GLBT indicated that it will prepare a robust narrative on alternatives screening and route variations presented in response to the information request and in consideration of scoping comments on alternatives. GLBT's narrative will include identification and explanation of specific locations ("anchor points") along existing rail lines where all reasonable alternatives for the proposed rail line would need to connect. OEA will independently review the information submitted by GLBT. OEA explained that a detailed justification would be needed from GLBT if it is asserting that only specific locations should be considered for the anchor points.