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March 29, 2016

Dave Navecky
Surface Transportation Board
Office of Environmental Analysis
395 E. Street SW
Washington, DC 20423-0001

Dear Mr. Navecky:

I am writing in regards to Docket No. FD35952 regarding the Great Lakes Basin Railroad project. My family lives in Boone County, Illinois. The township we reside in is called Spring Township. This project proposes constructing tracks through our township and county. Boone County has many acres of very fertile soil. American Farmland Trust has a website, www.farmland.org, that shows a map on how Boone County is targeted as one of the few counties left in Illinois that is considered to have high quality farmland, but is also targeted with high development. As we hear in the media, our population is growing. It takes quality farmland to produce the food needed to feed this growing population. At what point do we finally say we NEED to preserve our farmland that feeds people over the needs or wants of private investors for profit?

Spring Township received its name because of all the springs of water underground and the high water table. We have been farming in this township for over 25 years, and it does live up to its name. When my husband was planting crops in his field one year, he actually sunk in the ground getting stuck by one of the springs. Many miles of drainage tile have been installed in the fields to help alleviate this problem and the flooding it causes when it rains. How much of this drainage tile will be damaged with the building of this project? Water needs to flow in a straight line with the proper amount of grade. What about the possibility of a hazardous material derailment? The hazardous material spill could cause the poisoning of topsoil, the loss of valuable topsoil, and pollution to our water supply. Also, there are dairy farms along the proposed rail route. Depending on how many mile the radius of evacuation is could affect these farms. Dairy cows can not be evacuated. The cows get milked every 12 hours. If the evacuation is longer than 12 hours, it could be very detrimental to the livelihood of that dairy family. Not to mention what it will do to the health of the cows because of the hazardous waste that could be spilled. Another factor in our community is the lack of training and experience with our first responders in the event of something so dangerous. How many people need to be harmed because of such a huge undertaking? Remember, we are a small farming community!

Please take into consideration all of the facts given to you and the environmental impact this proposed project will have on our farmland and our community and how it will devastate many communities along the approximately 280 miles of tracks.

Sincerely,



Lisa Fitzgerald

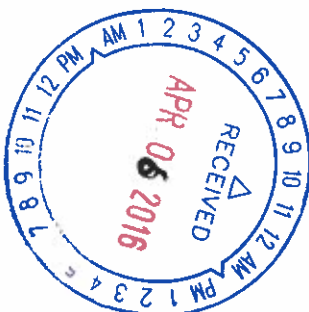
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