



EI-25105

CRAIG & CRAIG, LLC
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

July 15, 2016

Sent via Email @ david.navecky@stb.dot.gov

David Navecky
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street SW
Washington, D.C. 20423-0001

Re: Docket Number FD 35952

Dear Mr. Navecky:

My family and I live on property located at 184 South 500 West, Valparaiso, IN. It has come to our attention that the transportation board is considering allowing a railroad to install tracks that would run near our property and close to where our children go to elementary school. A decision to allow the train tracks to come through this area would impact the people of our small community in several ways.

I know there are many farmers who have reached out to you to discuss how it would impact their farming or directly impact their property should the railroad be put on or near their properties. We would echo those concerns including but not limited to the risk of having railroad tracks so close to an elementary school.

One of the other concerns that we have with the railroad being placed in our community, is the impact it will have on the tax base upon which the schools rely for the money to fund the daily programs and teachers salaries. As you may be aware, real estate taxes in Indiana go to fund the education system within the communities within which we live. The real estate taxes, however, are strictly limited by a one percent, two percent or three percent cap on the value of the property. Most of the property in the area that would fund the Boone Grove School System entails property that is taxed at a one percent (residential rate) or two percent (other residential rate). If the railroad were to be allowed to place these tracks through properties in our area, the obvious result is that the value of the properties directly affected will go down. If the property value goes down, then the amount of tax paid will accordingly go down. This will mean that our area will have a lower tax base upon which to draw resources. This will affect not only those people who have homes directly impacted by where the rail line is placed, but all residents who live in the area where the tax bases are going to plummet.

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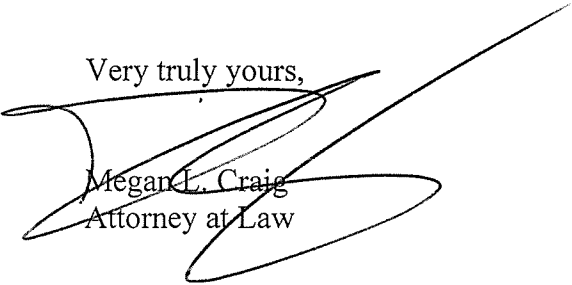
Phone: 219-661-9100
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Given the number of abandoned rail lines in Northwest Indiana, it does not appear to be a necessary avenue for rail line expansion. The impact on those of us who live in this area would be substantial.

We would request that you take these thoughts into consideration when making your determination. Should you wish to contact me, please feel free to do so at the telephone number above.

Thank you for your attention and cooperation in this regard.

Very truly yours,



Megan L. Craig
Attorney at Law

MLC/nl
cc: Nick Snow