



Great Lakes Basin Rail Line

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

EI-24651

How Do I Submit Comments?

- **Written Comments:** Complete and submit this form at a public meeting, or mail your comments to the Surface Transportation Board's address at the bottom of this page.
- **Recorded Comments:** Provide your comments to a court reporter at a public meeting.
- **Electronic Comments:** Submit electronic comments by visiting the Surface Transportation Board's website, www.stb.dot.gov, and clicking on the "E-Filing" link and then clicking on "Environmental Comments."

Please refer to Docket No. FD 35952 in all correspondence addressed to the Surface Transportation Board. The comment deadline is May 16, 2016.

Dear Board

June 16th JUNE 15

Safety and land use are two important issues that are significant if the railroad is approved. It only takes one derailment to destroy us and the our farms will be destroyed with a railroad tracks running through the fields.

Enclosed are two articles which verify our concerns. The first is a derailment (1) occurred in the "open" (2) near a town (3) near a school (4) was destroyed fire (5) environmentalist against rail transfer of hazardous material. The second is our love for our land and farming: (A) mention the rail (B) close proximity to proposed rail (C) mention farm loss of land and why (D) farm life is healthy, safe and good to the next generation.

NOTE: When an individual provides to submit an environmental comment or other submission, his or her personal contact information is considered public information and is shared within and outside of STB without additional authorization.

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY/STATE/ZIP CODE

PHONE

E-MAIL

Jane L. Austgen
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Noblesville, Indiana 46034
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Comments may be submitted today or mailed to:

Dave Navecky
Surface Transportation Board
ATTN: Docket No. FD 35952
395 E Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20423-0001

Please deny railroad!

FOLD HERE SECOND



Jan Austgen
15080 County Line Rd
Hebron, IN 46341

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06 JUN 2016 PM 4 L



Dave Navecky
Surface Transportation Board

ATTN: Docket No. FD 35952

395 E Street, SW

Washington, D.C. 20423-0001



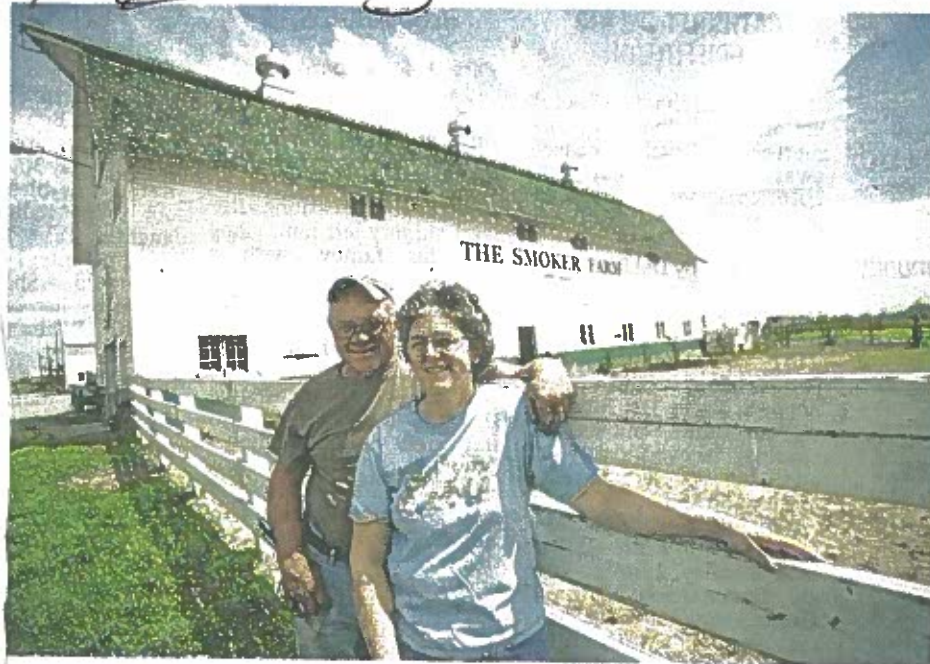
20423-0001



FOLD HERE FIRST

**Our life and love!
Farmers love their land!*

SATURDAY, JUNE 4, 2016 | A5



Deb and Greg Smoker stand in front of the barn on their farm on U.S. 30 in Wanatah. Their barn is a winner of The Top 10 Bicentennial Barns contest.

DAN SHELTON, THE TIMES

Landmark LaPorte County barn at center of thriving family farm

MARCIA SWEET
Times Correspondent

WANATAH — Who knew the tale of a barn could have so many plot twists?

Built in 1938 when U.S. 30 was just a small road cutting through farmland and barns were commonplace, the Smoker barn is now one of LaPorte County's central landmarks.

Owners of the property asked a young farmer named Dwight Smoker to help design and build a barn. In 1943, that same man purchased the farm and inscribed his name on the barn.

Days after great-grandson Jacob "Jake" Smoker reinforced the interior of the Smoker Barn in 2014, a tornado obliterated the larger barn standing just yards away, leaving the Smoker Barn untouched.

That same building is being celebrated as one of the Top 10 Bicentennial Barns in Indiana. It is also in the spotlight because the property it sits on is the featured farm for the 2016 Row Crop Ag Tour and Barbecue. The Smoker family will be hosting tours of the facility as part of the July 28 event.

"It's amazing," Jake Smoker said. "It's hard to believe."

B The barn, less than a mile from the intersection of U.S. 30 and U.S. 421, is a massive, two-story, white structure with a forest-green shingled roof and matching green foundation. A white fence encloses the barn, protecting the three horses that live there.

The Smoker family is as proud of the barn and its surrounding farm now as Dwight Smoker was then. But it is the land, not the landmark they truly love.

"God puts you on the Earth for a purpose," said Deb Smoker, who manages the farm's finances and helps where needed. "Our family chooses to work his land. It's our calling to till the land and care for animals."

The operation stretches over 1,400 acres. In addition to growing various types of corn, cucumbers, squash, grain sorghum and hay, the farm has more than 1,000 heads of dairy beef.

Greg Smoker, Deb's husband, grew up on Smoker Farm and returned after graduating from Purdue University to help his father, Jim. She became a teacher, but eventually left the classroom for farm and family.

Their four children, Joseph,

Jake, James and Melissa, grew up in the shadow of the famous barn. Their animals, which won county and state fair competitions, lived there.

For 16 years, those children planted and sold pumpkins to pay their way through college. Over the years, the brothers have returned to work the land they love. Melissa is completing her studies at Purdue University.

"In what other profession can you take nothing but the earth and create something beautiful," Joe Smoker said. "It may not be perfect, but it is beautiful. It might be hard at times. Sixteen-hour days. But at the end of the day, you can look out the window and say, 'I did right by that land.'"

Jake Smoker, who spent five years working in Chicago, now lives with his wife, Jill, in a home on the farm. He said they moved back because they wanted to raise their family on the farm. Their daughter — the first of the fifth generation — is expected to arrive July 5.

"It was important to us that she grow up here," Jake Smoker said. "And one day she is going to join 4-H and keep her horse right in there."

Oregon train derailment spills oil, sparks fire

GILLIAN FLACCUS
Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. — A train towing cars full of oil derailed Friday in Oregon's scenic Columbia River Gorge, sparking a fire that sent a plume of black smoke high into the sky and leading to evacuations.

The accident happened around noon near the town of Mosier, about 70 miles east of Portland. It involved eight cars filled with oil, and one was burning, said Ken Armstrong, state Forestry Department spokesman.

No injuries have been reported.

About 200 students were evacuated from an elementary and middle school near the scene.

Interstate 84 was closed for a 23-mile stretch between The Dalles and Mosier and the radius for evacuations was a half-mile.

The train was operated by Union Pacific. A spokesman for the railroad didn't return calls.

Silas Bleakley was working at his restaurant in Mosier when the train de-

railed.

"You could feel it through the ground. It was more of a feeling than a noise," he told The Associated Press as smoke billowed from the tankers.

Bleakley said he went outside, saw the smoke and got in his truck and drove about 2,000 feet to a bridge that crosses the railroad tracks.

There, he said he saw tanker cars "accordioned" across the tracks.

Another witness, Brian Shurton, was driving in Mosier and watching the

train as it passed by the town when he heard a tremendous noise.

"All of a sudden, I heard 'Bang! Bang! Bang!' like dominoes," he said.

He, too, drove to the bridge overpass to look down and saw the cars flipped over before a fire started in one of the cars and he called 911, he said.

"The train wasn't going very fast. It would have been worse if it had been faster," said Shurton, who runs a windsurfing business in nearby Hood River.

Environmentalists reacted quickly to the accident and called it a reminder of why oil should not be transported by rail.

"Moving oil by rail constantly puts our communities and environment at risk," said Jared Margolis, an attorney at the Center for Biological Diversity in Eugene, Oregon.

Matt Lehner, a spokesman from the Federal Railroad Administration, said a team of investigators was headed to the scene from Vancouver, Washington.

Our Fear

10-4-76