

October 27, 2016
6565 N Broadway Rd
Appie River, IL 61001

Mr. David Navecky
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street SW
Washington, DC 20423-0001

Dear Mr. Navecky,

I am writing in regards to the proposed construction of the new railway by Frank Patton's Great Lakes Basin Transportation. For too many years agricultural property has been relegated to "junk" status: vacant and unused. The greatest blessing of the United States has always been the farmland. Nowhere else on Earth can be found the equal of America's great heartland. Ask any other country how much they would willing to give for a few square miles of DeKalb, Champaign, McLean, Sangamon or Boone county's agricultural land in Illinois. Agriculture is still the biggest exporter in the U.S. Agribusiness is the biggest industry in the U.S. (outside of the government). But is still regarded as vast wasteland available to anyone who convince the government to hand them the power of Eminent Domain especially if they can hold out the carrot of new jobs, irresistible to our elected officials.

I submit the Great Lakes Basin project's main intention is NOT to carry freight, but instead to build new pipelines and utility lines which otherwise could not obtain approval. Just try and get a new pipeline built anywhere in today's climate. This railroad is just a Trojan Horse to make huge profits for it's owners at the expense of future food production. Just watch them salivating over the profits of leasing "their" land to oil pipelines competing with the railroads crude oil transportation business. I imagine they would find a legal way to be held harmless in the event of any spills.

I also suggest there is no real need for any new rail lines to be carved out of our valuable agricultural lands. Railroads have been abandoning lines and consolidating ownership since WW II. In our county, Jo Daviess, Illinois, the Chicago Great Western Railway right of way disappeared in 1968 after it was merged with the Chicago and North Western Railway. The C&NW itself was purchased in 1995 by the Union Pacific and quickly ceased to exist. Under Illinois law that right of way reverts back to the landowner. Our county's sole remaining rail line, running from Chicago to Dubuque, was originally built by the Illinois Central Railroad back in 1853. In 1995 IC was purchased by the Canadian National railroad. In 1999 CN merged with BNSF (the Burlington Northern and the Atchison Topeka and Santa Fe) and left the name BNSF on the rolling stock in the U.S. I believe our stretch has barely three trains a day, mainly empty cars going west because the grade heading east is steeper than other routes. Today Illinois is home to just 7,000 miles of rail lines, down from the Illinois railroads' Golden Years mileage of 12,000 miles. It would seem there are still plenty of railroads in Illinois to haul the freight across the country but not enough miles of pipelines.

Yours,

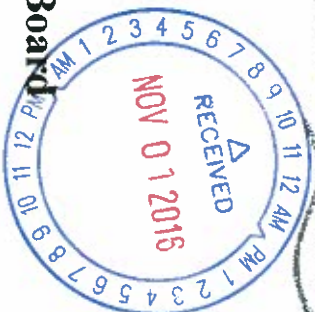


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