

July 12, 2016

Mr. Dave Navecky
Office of Environmental Analysis
Surface Transportation Board
Docket No. FD 35952
395 E Street SW
Washington, DC 20423-0001

Dear Mr. Navecky,

This letter is to express our whole hearted opposition to the proposed GLBT railroad project, Docket No. FD 35952. As concerned citizens and residents that would live less than ¼ mile from the railroad using the proposed route, we have serious concerns about the railroad and how it will affect the safety, economy, environment and well-being of all living in its vicinity. There is so much unknown about this project. What IS known is that it will have a negative impact on life in our rural community as we know it. Reports show 1,567 homes would be within 1 mile of the proposed railroad in our county alone.

Already our home values have dropped because of the proposal. They will certainly drop further should the railroad become a reality. As a retired couple we have looked forward to our quiet retirement years here at our mini-farm. This is the life we have chosen. We would never have chosen to live less than ¼ mile from a high speed freight train track.

My husband Jim is a 100% disabled veteran with congestive heart failure and we want to feel secure in knowing that we can get an ambulance and trained personnel here as quickly as possible. The volunteer fire departments and our police are concerned about how quickly they will be able to respond due to blocked crossings and closed roads. This has caused us to fear for our safety living here in the future should this railroad become a reality.

Our schools are concerned about the many crossings our children will be crossing going to and from school. Also It seems that there is a derailment or train accident in the news every week. The material being transported by rail will likely be hazardous. How will our small community be able to respond to a disaster like that?

Farmers are concerned about having their land parcels divided and in many cases land locked. Farming is so important to our economy. Taking good farm land and turning it into a railway and taking 15,000 acres to turn into a "rail port" would be extremely detrimental to many people. Also our area has many drainage ditches. The Essex area is low-land and much money

and work has gone into draining flood prone areas. Cutting across these ditches and field tiles will no doubt harm the area causing flooding to fields, roads and homes.

We value the environment of our area which contains the beautiful Kankakee River State Park. The current proposed route passes through the park. This will have a huge effect on the environment of the park impacting visitors and wildlife.

So far it appears to us that Mr. Patton has not been truthful in his discussions with concerned residents. Major railroads have come forward and said that they have no interest in using his "toll railway." Using imminent domain to obtain property for a private railway is abuse of the process. We see no benefit to the public by allowing it, in fact it appears to be quite the reverse. Also we question the need for it in the first place. Apparently Chicago doesn't want the bypass either.

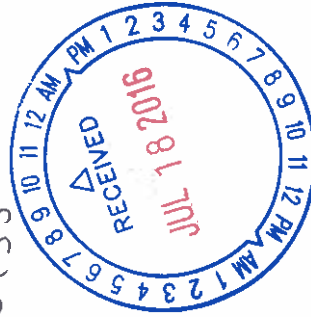
In closing, it is our belief that this entire project should be stopped. Changing the route to impact another family a few miles from here is not what we want. We do not want our surrounding neighbors to lose their quality of life either. Until there is a PROVEN need and a benefit to the public we will remain opposed to the use of imminent domain that will be needed to advance this disastrous idea impacting 3 states and thousands of families.

Yours truly,

James Robb
Debra Robb

James and Debra Robb
Residents of Essex Township
Kankakee County
Illinois

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