

Re: Docket # FD-35952

Mr. Navecky,

In this letter I would like to address the impact of the proposed GLB rail project on the human environment.

The human environment has been negatively impacted for all those with property crossed by, or near the proposed GLB rail project. **Through absolutely no fault of their own, people's lives have been turned upside down!** The 'vision' of one man, Mr. Frank Patton, and the fact that he has been allowed to take the proposed project as far as he has, has caused stress, sleepless nights, worry, discontent, disagreements, fear, anger, and generally affected property owners in a negative way. People are wondering whether or not to invest in remodeling their homes, they worry about their livelihood, they worry about resale value, they worry about the impacts on their livestock, they see their dream country retirement home go up in flames, they worry about noise, safety of drinking water, their kids health, safety of school busses, and rail crossings. They worry about the legacy that they had hoped to pass on, they worry about eminent domain. The hundreds and hundreds of letters to the STB attest to all the negative impacts on the lives of ordinary people; people who believed that they owned what they owned.

This process has allowed one man to put many of their hopes and dreams on hold. One man, who if allowed a permit, can break up family farms, take away ordinary citizens' dreams of a quiet place in the country. One man, who if allowed to built his rail, can make life much harder and less safe for hundreds of farmers by dividing their fields and running trains next to their livestock. One man, who if allowed a permit, will forever change the way our communities function and operate. One man, who if given a permit, can take our land against our will! The time, money, and energy many people have already spend fighting to keep what is theirs to begin with is staggering. Some days I wake up and wonder if I really am in America. Allowing one man and his very speculative 'vision' to even get this far is not the American way!

People have been forced to spend countless hours just to figure out the STB approval process, how to inform other people, how it can and will affect them, what the recourse options are, how to organize themselves, how to fund raise for legal fees, they have scrambled to get a grasp on the impact of what has been proposed. To make all this even worse, there is very little actual information provided. The route is not set, it can move 30 miles either way, no one knows who the investors are, no one even knows who the customers are. We cannot trust the information given by Mr. Patton, private financing one day, government loans the next, anywhere from 15 to 110 trains a day, non-disclosure agreements with all Class I railroads which proved to be untrue in at least one case, a rail yard so big the largest rail yard in the world fits in it five times, a mysterious 50 foot easement for utilities to help provide revenue, a 150 foot wide easement for just one rail in Boone and Rock County, so called 'concern' over the safety of at-grade crossing and yet there are 200 of them proposed, promises of a Quiet Zone which are not his to make. All that and still Mr. Patton manages to state on his website that he wants to be "a good neighbor".

If it sounds like I am rambling chaotically, I am! Myself and many others have been confused and disoriented, left feeling without control over the lives and futures of our families and farms. Such is the life many of us have lived since finding out about the

proposed GLB rail project. So far I can tell you with absolute certainty that the proposed project has done nothing positive for the public need and necessity, our human environment has already been damaged.

How one profit oriented man without a publicly available business plan, without numbers to back up the claims of expediting traffic around Chicago, without identified clients, without identified investors or financing, without numbers justifying the 8 billion dollar price tag, without public collaboration with other vested parties, without clearly defined need for all that he proposes, and without any railroad experience was allowed to do all the damage he has done to people's lives over the last few months is beyond me. It sets a most terrible precedent for the future.

How to mitigate all the concerns affecting our human environment: lost dreams, broken up family farms, damage to our natural environment, loss to our agricultural economy, noise and vibrations, years of uncertainty and anguish, worries about oil and other hazardous material spills, and the list goes on. I do not know what the answer is, surely you will find some things to change or improve upon but whatever you do, approval of this project will never make the people affected whole again. After all, the definition of *mitigate* according to the Merriam-Webster dictionary is: to make (something) **less** severe, harmful, or painful (emphasis added).

The **only** thing that will eventually restore our human environment again is a "No Action" decision by the STB Board.

Mirjam Melin
8608 East Rye Drive
Clinton, WI 53525