

ATTN: Docket # FD 35952

Mr. Navecky

Surface Transportation Board

Docket No. FD 35952

395 E Street, SW

Washington, DC 20423-0001

Mr. Navecky,

My name is Gary Paarlberg and I would like to ask that you not approve the Great Lakes Basin Railroad project. I am a farmer who has farmed for 42 years in the area that is now being proposed for the Manteno Illinois rail port. If this goes through it would destroy our home farm consisting of our buildings and 200 acres of land that my father purchased 42 years ago when we were forced out of the Chicago suburbs due to urban sprawl. At that time we never even considered that we may be forced to relocate again. We have spent the last 42 years building and adding improvements to these buildings at a great amount of time and cost to tailor them to our needs at a cost of hundreds of thousands of dollars in materials and countless hours of our time. Who would compensate us for all the time if we have to rebuild? We have also been installing underground drainage tiles at a cost of over \$100,000.00 to improve our land for the future. If this project is approved it would basically eliminate our ability to continue our farm operation.

We also have another farm that we rent located closer to Manteno Illinois that is in the path of a "Flyover" for Route 50 and a North-South railroad so much of this farm would also most likely be destroyed also. It is very difficult to find more land to rent to replace what we would lose and this situation would also be worsened if the GLB RR were to happen.

Also if this project goes through there will be a tremendous cost to many farmers farming along the line for them when they work their fields. I have recently been applying crop inputs to my fields and when you have small fields or fields that are not square it makes a huge difference in time and cost to work the area along a slanted edge of a field. This will be a cost that will occur year after year thus increasing the possibility that there may be more environmental damage.

Another reason that this would be bad for the environment is that drainage systems would be cut off and remaining land would lose value due to flooding and creating more mosquito populations thus creating more health hazards for people living in the area.

Also there would be more accidents between farm machinery and cars because of the increased traffic on the roads that will remain open.

We also have no clue what would be done with the 15,000 acre rail port that is proposed. Would there be hazardous materials placed on it causing undue harm to the underground aquifers or would there be a landfill sited on it also causing more dire environmental effects or other unknowns that would also be detrimental to the environment?

There would be increased noise in the area due to the trains passing through.

Emergency responders would be delayed by the trains or closed roads thereby increasing the possibility of loss of life to area residents.

The railroad is proposed to run directly through the Kankakee River State Park which would undoubtedly harm the many species of wildlife which live in the area and it would cross many streams and the Kankakee River which would create the possibility of environmental damage should a derailment or accident were to occur.

Mr. Patton who is the spokesperson for this project has stated that they will provide private crossings for any parcel that is landlocked. I find it hard to believe that this will occur because railroads currently are trying to close every crossing they can because of the liability due to fast moving trains. He also states that they will put in a spur for anyone who wants one so they can ship a rail road car of their product out of their farm or business. This pretty much would defeat the purpose of this project as we are told it is to speed up rail traffic through this area. From what I have seen the railroads are forcing shippers to load 100 cars in 8 hours that are all bound for 1 destination so they do not have to make multiple stops along the route.

Also 2 railroads have publicly stated that they have no interest in this project and would not use it and no others have publicly stated any support for it.

There is currently a project under way called C.R.E.A.T.E. in the Chicago area that is reducing the travel time through the area that when finished should negate the need for the Great Lakes Basin Railroad.

This project is simply someone trying to take land for another purpose that we do not know what it is. I attended a meeting that Mr Patton spoke and he seemed to be very vague with his answers to the questions that were asked and many promises were made to us that no one believed such as free electricity. How can he do that? He also states that he wants a 50' extra strip of land alongside this Railroad so he can sell it for utility easements. As I understand it he has no legal ability to do this.

I would ask that you not approve this project. Thank you.


Gary Paarlberg

6159 E 11000N Road

Grant Park, IL 60940

Paarlberg Farms
6159 E. 11000 N. Road
Grant Park, IL 60940



SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
ATTN: DAVE NAVECKY
DOCKET NO. FD 35952
395 E STREET SW
WASHINGTON DC 20423-0001

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