

June 22, 2016

Mr. David Navecky
Office of Environmental Analysis
Surface Transportation Board
3956 E Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20432-0001

Re: Comment on Docket No. 35952

Dear Mr. Navecky:

The Wisconsin River Rail Transit Commission (WRRTC) was created in 1980, and is comprised of nine counties: Crawford, Dane, Grant, Iowa, Rock, Sauk, Walworth, Waukesha and Jefferson. Each of these counties appoints representatives to the commission to ensure their county has reliable access to freight rail service while helping local communities to be economically competitive through connections to the national rail system.

WRRTC works in collaboration with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) and Wisconsin & Southern Railroad (WSOR) to service much of southern Wisconsin. WisDOT owns the rail corridors, but the rail transit commission invests local money in maintaining and improving the tracks. The track is then leased to WSOR for the right to operate on the rail system, which ships items such as military vehicles, grain, grain by-products, plastics and canned goods over the network.

The proposed Great Lakes Basin Railroad (GLBR) will be built right through the WRRTC and WSOR rail system. The proposed line terminates in Milton, Wisconsin at a connection point with the WRRTC rail network at WSOR's Waukesha subdivision. The construction and operation of the proposed GLBR will most certainly have long-term cumulative financial impacts on the existing rail infrastructure, including the cost of upgrading the system to accommodate increased rail traffic and congestion on the system that will impact WRRTC member counties, WSOR and its customers.

The WRRTC has estimated that the proposed increase in rail traffic will force the commission to upgrade the current rail infrastructure from the planned Class II system standard. Improvements to the freight rail system are generally paid for by the owner of the system, with additional support from the WisDOT's Freight Rail Improvement Program. An expenditure by the WRRTC to accommodate the GLBR in Southeast Wisconsin would require the use of taxpayer dollars that will take away from other, high priority freight rail investments throughout the system.

WRRTC has concerns about the GLBR and the implications not only to the surrounding communities where the proposed rail line is being built, but also the impact on the rail system that is maintained through the commission. We ask that the Surface Transportation Board look at all possible alternatives and consult with local governing bodies and other entities that may already be involved in rail in the southeastern Wisconsin region.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Sweeney', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

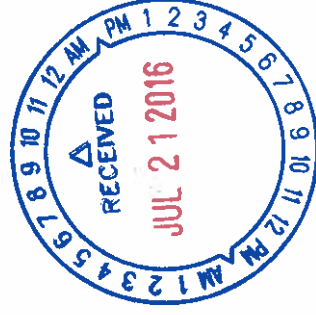
Alan Sweeney

WRRTC Chair

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Wisconsin River Rail Transit Commission Chair
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