

Jim Jost and Alexandria Mercer
8719 Cemetery Road
Winnebago
Illinois 61088

Ms Ann Begeman
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street
SW
Washington DC 20423

21st October 2016

Dear Ms Begeman

We write concerning the proposed building of a new toll railroad to run from Indiana to Milton, Wisconsin by a private group of entrepreneurs - Finance Docket Number 35952

Many Illinois residents are totally unaware of this project. Yet the construction and running of this line has far reaching consequences, not just for those in close proximity to the line, but for many hundreds of thousands of Illinois residents who use road transport to schools, hospitals and their workplace, make use of local water supply and those who enjoy bird life and have environmental interests.

Over and above the land use marked up and allocated on the current route plan (not finally confirmed), many additional acres of productive farmland will go to waste because they will become inaccessible, practically and economically.

This rail line is not necessary for the State of Illinois. There is no sound evidence that Illinois residents will benefit either short or long term from its construction, either in terms of employment opportunity or improved facilities. In fact, quite the reverse. Roads will be closed; residents will need to travel further to reach their destinations; emergency journeys to hospitals will be disrupted potentially costing lives, for example, residents located west of Rockford will potentially have delayed emergency times to reach Rockford hospitals; increased road crossings will undoubtedly lead to more accidents together with their resulting costs.

The rail line construction proposed by GLB may well reduce local revenues. Property in the

vicinity of the line will be reduced in value and thus generate less tax for the communities.

On the environmental front, the line is planned to cross rivers at least three times. Any accident has the potential to seriously impact water supply, migration wetlands and contamination of surrounding farmland. No rail transport is immune from accidents.

The case put forward by Great Lakes Basin Railway regarding rail congestion in Chicago is questionable as a) this congestion is already being addressed by the project CREATE and b) two of GLB'S potentially six customers for their proposed new line have already rejected interest in it.

The GLB case centers on congestion and time delays at Chicago terminal. Since when has the time to transport material goods taken precedence over peoples' lives, homes and well-being? On a moral front, how can it be acceptable that many thousands of people will have their lives irrevocably impacted to benefit a handful of rich investors?

We are very concerned ourselves about this project and more so because so few residents have been engaged in this matter due to lack of awareness. We respectfully request that time be extended for public debate and comment.

Please advise how this may be achieved.

Yours sincerely



Jim Jost and Alexandria Mercer