

TO; Mr. David Navecky Surface Transportation Board david.navecky@stb.dot.gov, stb.dot.gov 395 E Street SW Washington, DC 20423-0001

From: Robert Walsh 568 N Chamberlain Rd Esmond, Illinois 60129 and 19898 E Lindenwood Rd Lindenwood, Illinois 61049

Re: Docket No. FD 35952

My name is Robert Walsh. At mile marker 178 I have property at the Chamberlain Rd address (above) which is currently used to raise Black Angus cattle. The proposed tracks pass about fifty feet west of our pasture. Agribusiness has been an important industry here for over 150 years. An industrial application such as a railroad does not fit.

Preserve and protect our land. There is no need for a Bakken oil pipeline on wheels.

Safety 1: The proposed Great Lakes Basin Railroad/pipeline is dangerous. The purpose, as proposed, is to speed up trains, including those that ship hazardous materials such as Bakken oil from North Dakota and Canada. In Canada there is a 6 mile per hour speed limit (10 KPH) for trains that carry hazardous material such as Bakken oil. Instead of granting permission for the proposed railroad to be built in order to speed up shipments by rail, the proposed trains should actually be required to slow down to 6 MPH in order to preserve and protect people and the environment. It has been mentioned that they want to run trains with dangerous cargo/hazardous material at 70 miles per hour near our homes. At a League of Women Voters meeting in Rochelle, Illinois during a discussion on the dangers of the transportation of oil, a representative of the Rochelle Fire Department said that they do not have enough gel to fight a large oil train fire. When the Superintendent of the Rochelle Elementary School District asked how to handle students after an oil train accident, the answer was, "Tell them (the students) to run". In the United States oil pipelines have to put up a \$1 billion dollar insurance bond. How many billions of dollars in insurance bonds is the proposed railroad going to put up? Personally, I would not object to an oil pipeline near my property. It is much safer. They also are asking for permission to run utilities alongside the tracks. The danger of transporting oil alongside electric lines is obvious. An accident would be catastrophic.

Safety 2: According to a Los Angeles Times article titled "Why are there so many oil train crashes?" the problem is the tracks. When the oil in the tank cars sloshes back and forth the tracks fail. Naturally, the faster the train goes the more dangerous the oil train becomes. Tracks are spaced 56 ½ inches apart. If the tracks' spacing move by 3 ½ inches there will be a derailment. That is why there is a 6 MPH limit for oil trains in Canada.

Infrastructure 1: In Ogle County, Illinois to the east of the 178 mile marker (my property) the closest north/south road parallel to the proposed tracks is a one lane gravel road called Chamberlain Road. If Lindenwood Road (an east/west road) were blocked by a train, ambulances going to my Lindenwood home (yes, ambulances have been called to my Lindenwood Road home several times.) and or fire trucks only alternative route would be to use that one lane gravel road (Chamberlain) which is more likely to be closed in snow conditions because it is not a primary road. In order to be a road that would be adequate for emergency vehicles it would have to be widened to two lanes and paved. Who is responsible for the costs? This is an infrastructure and safety issue. Because Chamberlain Road is a gravel road there is a lot of dust that is created by the infrequent cars that use it. If the railroad causes

more cars and trucks to use Chamberlain Road more dust will travel towards Chicago and states to the east.

Infrastructure 2: The proposed track tracks' route from the north across Baseline Road (also a gravel road that runs east/west) south to Mowers Road passes through farmland that has major water problems. There are four creeks in that stretch that cross Chamberlain Road with water flow from east to west and during heavy rains water flows across Chamberlain Road flowing west in areas that are not near creeks. When farm rents went up recently the farmer, Russ Eychaner, who farmed the land near mile marker 178 opted not to rent the land because of water/flooding concerns. Farms on both sides of Chamberlain Road are heavily tiled. It is a constant fight to keep the creeks open. A portion of one creek passes through my property at 19898 East Lindenwood Road and flows west where the proposed railroad crosses it just west of Chamberlain Road. I spent close to \$5,000 in the fall of 2015 to dig out the creek and install 2 new 48" culverts. The proposed train line from Baseline Road south to route 64 should actually be on a several mile long bridge in order to handle heavy rains that occur from time to time and to keep my property from flooding.

Infrastructure 3: Water concerns east of Route 251 between Route 251 and Creston. There is little to no building taking place on Rochelle property to the east of route 251. It would be necessary to install pumps to be able to build in most areas east of Route 251. St. Patrick Church cannot build an addition to the church located on the east side of Rochelle because it is on a flood plain. No addition is allowed to be built on the Caron Road church. The church has bought property west of Route 251. This is why the land to the east of Route 251, including land to the east of Interstate Route 39, is unsuitable for any industrial application such as a railroad.

Environmental concern: The 4 creeks mentioned above are home to several blue herons. They are sensitive to any human activity.

Agribusiness/financial impact: The instigators of the railroad have said it will create jobs. The hourly wage in Mexico is just over \$2 per hour and wages are also low in Asia. There is a reason why Caterpillar, Ford, Chrysler, BMW are moving production to Mexico. Food production will be impaired for future generations. If the proposal is approved I, for example, will not be able to raise livestock at the Chamberlain Road location. I would estimate that the property's value will go down at least \$50,000 if it cannot be used for livestock purposes. The Chamberlain Road barn used to belong to DeKalb Ag which invented the flying ear of corn symbol. I invested a lot of money to save the barn because it is an historic building.

Instigators: Who and/or what country wants to build this? They say that they have a nondisclosure agreement. Permission to build should not be granted to a country or possible foreign interests who want to cut through American farmland just to make a profit while putting people and the environment in peril. The names and country of origin of the instigators should be vetted by U. S. Homeland Security.

Options 1: An oil pipeline would be much safer. I would not object to a pipeline passing 50 feet from my property line. I do object to two tracks with trains traveling 70 MPH by each other 50 feet from my property line as proposed.

Options/history 2: The American government created a Land Grant for the Illinois Central Railroad. Over 2 million acres of land was given away in order to create the Illinois Central Railroad. The railroad in turn sold the land to build the railroad. The tracks run from north to south through Illinois and there is even a spur line that runs into Wisconsin. A large part of the Illinois Central Land Grant tracks are now abandoned. That is not what the government intended when they created the Land Grant. The right of way already exists.

Options/history 3: There is an underused railway called the Illinois Railroad that is located west of Route 251 . The land is higher and it is two tracks wide. It even already passes through the Rockford Airport which the instigators of the railroad have proposed.

Improperly filed application: The Land Transportation Board is not the appropriate office for the siting of utilities. The applicants should be told to file the proper application with the proper office.

Question. Why do they need 15,000 acres for a repair facility? That is apparently 3 times the size of the largest facility now in existence. Do they intend to build a new refinery or what? That is a tremendous amount of lost food production. Beginning with the nondisclosure agreement they have been very deceptive. How can they be trusted?

Thank you for reading this. I would be happy to travel to Washington to discuss this or to discuss it on the phone. My phone number is (815) 762-9321

Sincerely,

Robert Walsh