

November 12, 2016

Mr Ken Blodgett, Surface Transportation Board
395 E. Street SW
Washington, DC 20423-0001

Docket No. FD35952, Great Lakes Basin Transportation, Inc.

Dear Mr. Blodgett:

I am a home and land owner in Winnebago County, State of Illinois. My farm land and my home would be affected by the current GLB proposal. I am requesting that the Public Scoping Comment Period be reopened to discuss this new proposed route. It is extremely important that you receive as much information as possible from the public as to how this railroad will affect not only Winnebago County, but a total of 278 miles from NE Indiana to Milton, WI.

It seems Mr. Frank Patton, Founder of GLB, has no rail experience. GLB has no past history. To date, no railroad has indicated they would use this "toll" railroad. This whole concept seems impossible. However, I am angry and concerned that this proposal could actually be approved by the Surface Transportation Board.

I am very concerned for the loss of some of the prime farm land in Illinois including the 150 acres I own. We have been told 24 acres of land would be required per mile of railroad tract. Two of our fields would have this rail running through it. Will anyone want to rent my farm property with a railroad running through the middle of the fields? We depend on the rental income to supplement our Social Security. Can farm equipment cross a 200 foot right of way safely? The natural grade of the land will be altered disrupting the natural flow of surface water, potentially creating ponds and/or wetlands. Stagnant water will lead to issues with mosquitoes and wildlife. Farm land taken for a "toll" railroad is forever destroyed. Nearby wetlands, creeks, woodlands and rivers will be environmentally affected.

This proposal includes railroad crossings at 30 roads in Winnebago County. I have been told several roads will be closed causing delays and extra mileage for emergency vehicles, school buses, farm equipment, and normal traffic. I live on Montague Road, a highly traveled road so no doubt an overpass would be built requiring more of our land and possibly relocation of our home. With so many rail crossings, the possibility of accidents rises.

There is always the possibility of spills and derailments with high speed rail creating a public safety hazard. Could potent chemicals sprayed along the track drift or affect groundwater? There are so many unanswered questions. No one asked for a railroad to be put in this area. Mr. Patton is out to make money and ruin our rural environment. Noise and vibration could have a negative effect on livestock production and dairy animals. I will lose rental income and my renter will have less productivity, thus less annual income. Our home value will decrease. No one will want to purchase our home and probably not the farm land either.

Page 2 – November 12, 2016

Mr. Dave Navecky, Surface Transportation Board

I am also wondering what happens if indeed this proposal is approved and GLB for some reason cannot complete the project. This business has no public record of building railroads or anything else. What about destruction of soil and property while this rail is being built? Will GLB provide satisfactory maintenance of the 200 foot wide easement, rail bridges etc.? What plans does GLB have for the 50 foot utility easement? There are so many questions. Once a decision is made, does STB monitor the project to make sure it is completed and maintained, and not a burden to taxpayers?

In summary, valuable farm land would be taken away. Remaining farm land will be subject to destruction from altered natural grade of the land, herbicides, and compacting soil. Smaller and odd shaped fields are difficult with modern farm machinery. There are several safety issues: railroad crossings, spills and/or derailments, longer response times for emergency vehicles. Great Lakes Basin is out to make money at the expense of mostly farmers who feed us. There is no need for a "toll" railway in this area or anywhere. We have existing railroads that have served the area very well. Please listen to the people and deny this request. This just doesn't add up.....a private business with no history trying to make a fortune, and destroying our farming communities in order to build an unneeded railway. I would encourage you to visit this area, if you are not familiar with rural communities, before making a decision.

Sincerely,

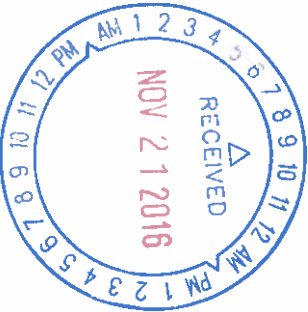


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