

**William Hamilton
244 Elm Ave
Cincinnati, OH 45215**

May 16, 2016

Mr. Dave Navecky
Surface Transportation Board
Docket No. FD 35952
395 E Street SW
Washington, DC 20423-0001

REF: Docket No. FD 35952

Dear Mr. Navecky,

I am writing in opposition to the Great Lakes Basin Railroad project and the severe environmental damages that it will inflict on many areas throughout three states as well as one area with which I am familiar.

According to the route narrative, the proposed path between mile posts 155 to 170 has, “no wetlands, wooded areas, or waterways affected by this segment.” This statement is incorrect. There are many “best practice” environmental improvements that have been made along this section as a result of the US I-39 Interstate construction in the late 1970s and early 1980s. At that time, the properties within this area were divided by the interstate right-of-way which adversely affected the drainage and anti-erosion practices in place. Since then, the owners of these properties have made significant environmental improvements to manage and reduce the damage done by the interstate corridor grades of the affected land. Now, an additional proposed railroad right-of-way grade through these environmentally improved and compliant properties will undo the environment-favorable work necessitated by the previous Illinois/U.S. Departments of Transportation highway grades. In addition, having two graded constructions (highway and railroad) within a few hundred-feet of each other will create miles of grade-locked land resulting in reduced run-off management, increased ponding, and concentrations of pollution caused by road and railroad contaminants. An aerial view as provided by your website (ref Map 10) http://greatlakesbasinraileis.com/documents/GLB_Scoping_DetailMaps_24k_10.pdf clearly shows the proximity of the two grades and the many waterways in place to mitigate previous environmental damages.

Therefore, the proposed route should *not* be one that creates new grades in such close proximity to existing grades. The best alternative with the least environmental impact is to route the railroad alongside existing railroad right-of-ways (Rochelle to Shabbona to Earlville). These existing grades have the correct infrastructure and existing environmental issues already addressed. They follow, essentially, the same path as the proposed railroad and have grade crossings that already exist. Short additional bypasses could be built around populated areas minimizing the environmental and human impact.

Sincerely,

William Hamilton

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