

Reference: Docket No FD-35952

My name is Carl Zimmerman. I was born, raised, and continue to live in Earlville, Illinois in northern LaSalle county.

I am currently farming in Meridan, Earl, and Freedom Townships. I grow corn, soybeans, and sweet corn for Del Monte processors in Mendota, IL. After working full time jobs related to the ag industry, in March of this year I finally fulfilled a lifelong dream of returning to the farm full time.

Shortly after returning home, I received word of the proposed rail line that Frank Patton and the Great Lakes Basin Transportation Company had proposed without any warning. After many sleepless nights, I decided something needed to be done to combat this glorified land grab and formed the BLOCK GLB RAILROAD group. This has led me to speaking in front of hundreds of people at informational meetings since Great Lakes Basin refused to pass along any information to the concerned landowners, farmers, homeowners, first responders, or people that live in rural areas affected by this disaster. This came at a huge personal cost to me and my family. Nights that should have been spent with my family, I was on the road till all hours after spending a full day on the farm. Any group that asked me to speak, I was there because I didn't want people to not know the details. From my understanding, projects like this go thru a six month period for people to get their information. However the STB decided to give Frank Patton a waiver on that and go directly to the Scoping period. First off that is a load of BS. If this is truly the biggest Rail project in 125 years, they should have never been given this waiver. I don't know who was responsible for this decision but I would like some answers. It should have never happened.

Some of my Key concerns have been field drainage and runoff. As a responsible farmer, I have invested thousands of dollars in field tiles, buffer strips, and other devices to help control the flow of water. Where I live in Earl Township on Rt 34, we have the BNSF tracks at the end of the field. It is a 100 acre field stretching back $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile. The tiles are a foot in depth with not a lot of natural fall to the Indian Creek approximately 1.5 miles to the west. We practice no-till and keep our equipment small as to not compact the silt loam soil. Great Lakes Basin is proposing to run their 200 foot easement about $\frac{1}{4}$ mile to the north of Rt 34 effectively cutting the north $\frac{2}{3}$ off. With their construction, they will cut off the natural flow of water and will damage any drainage we have there. It will effectively make a 70 acre section of stagnant water leading to a natural breeding grounds for mosquitos. With the town of Earlville being at the west edge of the property, this will be an increase on their already strained budget to spray for mosquitos every year.

Which leads to my second point. GLB is proposing a flyover over the two BNSF tracks at the edge of the property. In order to build these massive land projects, a total of 5 square acres dug to a depth of 16 feet will be required for ONE approach. That means 20 total square acres will have to be taken out of production never to be returned to a farmable state. This figure does not include the back excavation to get the equipment out of the pit. How do I know this? I HIRED AN ENGINEERING FIRM TO DO THE FIGURES! Out of my own pocket. This loss of acreage will be a \$16,000-\$20,000 loss of income just on this 100 acre field. Not to mention the fact the rail also crosses land I farm in Meridan Township. It could wipe out my enterprise as we work on thin margins the way it is.

Another issue is the probability of leakage from tank cars in this area. With tiles being shallow and numerous standpipes or inlets in the field, were a car to spill its contents, it will reach the Indian Creek which feeds into the Fox River approximately 10 miles to the southwest. The Fox feeds into the Illinois

river in Ottawa shortly thereafter. A spill could be a disaster of biblical proportions to say the least. Aquatic wildlife would be destroyed for generations not to mention the wildlife that feeds off of them and uses the water for drinking.

The third issue is the 15,000 acre land steal that GLB is proposing for Sumner Township in Kankakee County. At the Morris, IL meeting that Mr. Patton was at, he claimed they need those acres because and I quote: "We were told to build for the future." If this were allowed to happen, it would be the largest land swindle in history. His proposal of \$20,000 an acre would then be sold off to potential developers for \$20,000 a square foot. It would be a case of Eminent Domain for private gain. The largest rail port in the world is less than 6,000 acres. And GLB is asking for three times that? I cry foul. Most railyards are toxic waste zones with metallic dust hanging in the air. Getting in to everyone's lungs that live in close proximity. Fumes from idling locomotives contribute to that. Noise pollution from the engines and thousands of trucks that inhabit these places. Patton claims he is taking trucks off the road when in actuality he will put more on the road taxing our already crumbling infrastructure. The constant noise and glare from lights will cause health issues for those people living close by.

We all understand progress and that sacrifices need to be made. However when the CREATE program in Cook County is not even completed yet and they have shaved 11 hours of the average time for a freight train passing thru, I cannot see the need or public benefit this project is claiming.

Numerous groups including fire departments, schools, township and county boards have passed resolutions against this project. I implore the Surface Transportation Board to look at all the comments made and vote for a No-Build Resolution.

Carl Zimmerman
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