

Docket No FD 35952

Environmental Comment

Mr. Navecky,

We believe the negative impacts on farmers far outweigh any false promises Frank Patton has made to the farming community. His proposal of six (6) rail lines running parallel to one another carrying up to 110 trains per day would not allow for the feasibility of picking up grain from farm field sidings that he has discussed.

In the first place most farmers could not afford the cost of building a railroad siding on their farm and the cost of leasing cars to haul the grain when they will be losing the income from that land along with the additional land taken by eminent domain to build the rail line. In addition to that loss in income, the production losses from flooding due to the interruption in water flow and broken field tiles would have a long term negative affect on future income.

Also, bear in mind the trains traveling at speeds of at least 70 miles per, one train every 13 minutes, each one approximately one mile long, there would be no feasible way for these trains to stop and take the time to pick up these rail cars loaded with grain. The danger of attempting to do this would be tremendous!! No one looking at this realistically would believe that this is a viable possibility.

Insurance companies have already told farmers that they cannot be insured if they plan to cross these makeshift crossing in their fields that supposedly would allow them to reach landlocked parcels. The dangers and risks for human life attempting this are tremendously high. In case of an accident the unintended consequences of this could create disastrous results. On March 16, 1999 an Amtrak train known as "The City of New Orleans" derailed in Bourbonnais, Illinois when it struck a semi illegally crossing the tracks and was struck by the train.

In that case it was a passenger train and 14 people were killed and numerous others injured. With the examples we are citing, the farm machinery could be as large or even larger than the semi and the operator of the equipment would most certainly lose his or her life, but the potential of a massive explosion and fire when one of these trains derailed would be horrific and the repercussions would be felt for years if not decades to come.

Not only would that result in death(s) there would also be ground water contamination, soil contamination, air pollution but vast dangers to the entire environment. Is all of this risk something that the STB believes we should be forced to endure? Do you believe Frank Patton should profit from all of the harm he will inflict on everyone along the path of this 278 mile rail line? We don't think so. We don't believe it is fair for him to talk about a legacy he wants to leave to his children and grandchildren at the expense of the farmers and home owners who are trying to continue to hand down their farms and their property to their children and grandchildren, just as it had been handed down to them.

Please deny this project.

Patricia Mussman,
Lowell, Indiana