



Great Lakes Basin Rail Line

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

El-22603

Belvidere Scoping Mtg
4/8-19-16

How Do I Submit Comments?

- **Written Comments:** Complete and submit this form at a public meeting, or mail your comments to the Surface Transportation Board's address at the bottom of this page.
- **Recorded Comments:** Provide your comments to a court reporter at a public meeting.
- **Electronic Comments:** Submit electronic comments by visiting the Surface Transportation Board's website, www.stb.dot.gov, and clicking on the "E-Filing" link and then clicking on "Environmental Comments."

Please refer to Docket No. FD 35952 in all correspondence addressed to the Surface Transportation Board. The comment deadline is June 15, 2016.

see attached
Farm Week news article
on this project

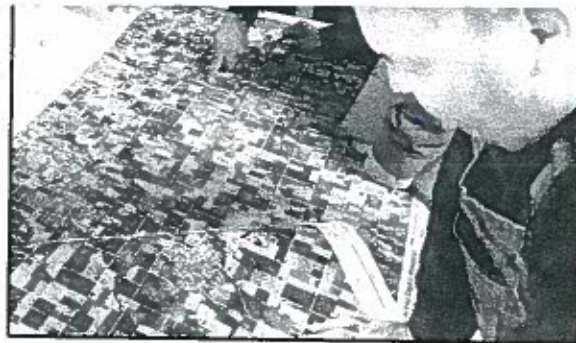
NOTE: When an individual chooses to submit an Environmental Comment or some Other Submissions, his or her personal contact information is considered public information and is shared within and outside of STB without additional authorization.

NAME: Deanna Larson
ADDRESS: 21543 N. Capron Rd
Capron, IL 61012
CITY, STATE, ZIP CODE:
PHONE: 815 737-8703
E-MAIL: phf-larson@yahoo.com

Comments may be submitted
today or mailed to:

Dave Navecky
Surface Transportation Board
ATTN: Docket No. FD 35952
395 E Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20423-0001

4-18-16



Left, Illinois Farm Bureau Senior Counsel Laura Harmon and Keith Mussman, Kankakee County Farm Bureau president, discuss the proposed Manteno railport, part of the Great Lakes Basin rail line project. Above, Kankakee County Farm Bureau member John Gricius holds the proposed route map of the 281-mile rail line as he listens to Dave Navecky of the U.S. Surface Transportation Board. (Photos by Chad Miller, Kankakee County Farm Bureau manager)

300 attend meeting about GLB rail line

BY DEANA STROISCH

FarmWeek

A proposed 281-mile rail line would run less than 500 feet from Lisa and Michael Riegel's home in Bonfield, compromising the farmland that's been in the family for generations.

The farmstead was purchased by Michael's grandfather more than 100 years ago. It's where Michael was raised — and where so many memories remain.

The Riegels have worked hard to improve the farm where they raise corn and soybeans, so they can pass it on to their three children.

But the future remains uncertain. Lisa Riegel said they're grieving the potential loss of their farm.

"You have to be a farmer and work the grounds and live it from one generation to another to understand the importance of the land," Lisa told **FarmWeek**. "It's heart-wrenching to know that someone can come along and take that."

The Riegels joined nearly 300 others last week at a public scoping meeting in Manteno held by the U.S. Surface Transportation Board (STB). The federal agency oversees railroads, and a three-member board appointed by President Barack Obama must approve a proposal to construct or operate a rail line unless it finds that activities are inconsistent with the "public convenient and necessity."

The Great Lakes Basin

Transportation LLC (GLB), a group of investors led by managing partner Frank Patton, want to build an \$8 billion, privately financed freight rail line to bypass Chicago. The line would run from La Porte, Ind., to Milton, Wis.

Kankakee County would lose about 16,000 acres of farmland — about 5 percent of the county's total — for the proposed rail line and a rail port in Manteno, said Keith Mussman, president of Kankakee County Farm Bureau.

The county Farm Bureau, which has about 5,000 members, opposes the project.

Mussman said the organization questions the need for the project as well as its viability. Formed in 2011, GLB has never operated as a rail carrier, but wants to build the largest rail line in 125 years, he said. He also pointed out that none of the railroads have signed on to use it.

"Our first choice will be for this project to go away," Mussman said. "At the very least, we strongly urge and request the STB deny any request for an exemption and give a full review to the project."

GLB also requested 50 feet within the proposed 200 foot right-of-way for pipelines and utility lines. The Farm Bureau believes STB doesn't have the authority to grant that request.

The crowd voiced concerns about the impact the rail line would have on the county's state park, eagles and monarch butterflies. Residents also

Additional meetings have been scheduled for the public to present oral or written comments on the project. Comments can also be submitted via email or online at {<http://www.greatlakesbasinraileis.com>} until June 15.

The meetings will be:

- April 19, 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m., Community building Complex of Boone County, 111 W. 1st. St., Belvidere.
- April 19, 5:30-8 p.m., Cherry Valley Fire Station, #2 Hall, 4919 Blackhawk Road, Rockford.
- April 20, 5:30-8 p.m., Rochelle Township High School Auditorium, 1401 Flagg Road, Rochelle.
- April 21, 5:30-8 p.m., Seneca High School Auditorium, 307 East Scott Street, Seneca.

expressed concerns about additional crossings causing delays for emergency vehicles, school buses and farm equipment. Some roads would have to be stubbed, creating other transportation headaches.

Others simply had questions that went unanswered.

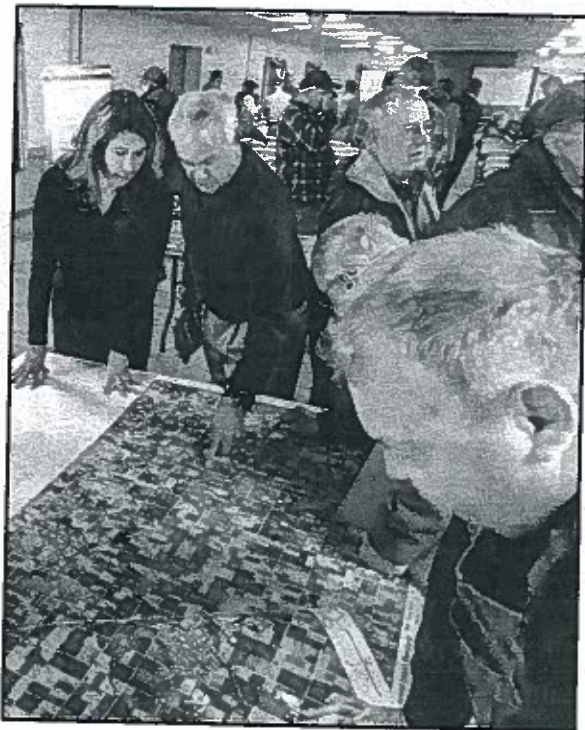
David Navecky of STB's Office of Economic Analysis said the public scoping meetings are the "very first step in a long process."

He said the environmental review alone could take two to three years.

For more information, visit the STB project website: {www.greatlakesbasinraileis.com}.

'Our first choice would be for this project to go away'

— Keith Mussman, president of Kankakee County Farm Bureau



Left, Illinois Farm Bureau Senior Counsel Laura Harmon and Keith Mussman, Kankakee County Farm Bureau president, discuss the proposed Manteno railport, part of the Great Lakes Basin rail line project. Above, Kankakee County Farm Bureau member John Gricius holds the proposed route map of the 281-mile rail line as he listens to Dave Navecky of the U.S. Surface Transportation Board. (Photos by Chad Miller, Kankakee County Farm Bureau manager)

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