

4/18/2016

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**PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING
FOR THE EIS
ON THE GREAT LAKES BASIN RAIL LINE**

Pursuant to notice, this matter came on for public meeting at Craig High School, 401 South Randall, Janesville, Wisconsin, on April 18, 2016 at approximately 5:00 p.m.

PRESENT:

Mr. Dave Navecky, Surface Transportation Board,
Office of Environmental Analysis

Ms. Phillis Johnson-Ball, Surface Transportation
Board, Office of Environmental Analysis

Mr. Alan Summerville, ICF International

1 (Public comments provided orally to
2 the reporter one-on-one.)

3 NANCY LARSON: This is in regards to
4 docket No. 35952. The proposed GLB rail project
5 in Rock County, Wisconsin.

6 Attention Dave Navecky, please consider
7 our concerns and/or questions as written below
8 when making the Environmental Impact Study.

9 We own a six-acre farmette located
10 along County Trunk Highway A and near the
11 Emerald Road Grove intersection in Johnstown
12 Township, Rock County. The proposed rail line
13 location threatens our rural way of life and
14 that of our community as we know it today.

15 Our farmette will be located one only
16 half mile from the proposed rail. We would see,
17 hear, feel, breath trains rumbling through our
18 countryside and adjacent farm fields at 70 miles
19 per hour.

20 We have serious concerns in regards to
21 the proposed crossing gates and rail signals to
22 be installed at the rail line crossing of County
23 Trunk Highway H. Heavy traffic flows along
24 County Trunk Highway A at plus 55 miles an hour,

1 with daily commuters that travel the County
2 Trunk Highway A corridor to reach work
3 locations, not only in the City of Janesville
4 but to interstate 90/39 to reach Madison and
5 Rockford, Illinois destinations.

6 In addition, daily commuters use County
7 Trunk Highway A to and from Janesville, east
8 into Walworth County work locations also.
9 Crossing gates and rail signals would not only
10 interrupt and stop this constant flow of traffic
11 but that of first responder emergency vehicles,
12 school buses, farm machinery, grain truck and
13 grain truck movement to and from field entrances
14 along County Trunk Highway A, plus trunk
15 transport from the dairy on County Trunk Highway
16 A as located a couple miles west of this
17 proposed crossing.

18 County Trunk Highway A is a heavily
19 traveled main thoroughfare, used not only by our
20 rural population of residences and businesses
21 but that of tourists in the summertime, heading
22 out to the lakes and Kettle Moraine recreation
23 areas. County Trunk A is used for east and west
24 travel as an alternative to State Highway 14

1 which is located two miles to the south of
2 County Trunk Highway A.

3 County Trunk Highway A is scheduled for
4 road improvements in the year 2017. Improvement
5 plans are in the design stage at this time.
6 When or will the Rock County Public Works
7 Engineer be notified of this proposed crossing?
8 Will a traffic count study be done? Most
9 certainly a traffic count study would validate
10 our concerns.

11 In addition, we see there is a planned
12 50-foot utility easement within the proposed
13 200-foot rail corridor. Am I correct in
14 assuming our public opinion would have no
15 jurisdiction, input, or say as to what type of
16 utility and/or multiple utilities that could be
17 placed either overhead or underground within the
18 private corridor of 50 feet? How would this
19 50-foot corridor be accessed for facility
20 placement and future maintenance?

21 Would utility encompasses cause future
22 problems for adjacent landowners? Would the
23 proposed private or public utility company be
24 subject to scrutiny by the Wisconsin Public

1 Service Commission who protects me, the public
2 consumer?

3 In the one-mile stretch along County
4 Trunk Highway A between Emerald Grove Road and
5 Tarrant Road, there are nine residences. The
6 proposed rail crossing is at the halfway mark
7 between these two intersecting town roads.

8 Johnstown Township is a heavy populated
9 area with many rural residents and homes located
10 along the intersecting and paralleling roads of
11 the proposed rail line. Many of our friends and
12 neighbors share the same or similar questions
13 and concerns including, most importantly,
14 certain devaluation of our properties.

15 We are opposed to the rail line being
16 built in Johnstown Township, Rock County.
17 Sincerely, Mr. and Mrs. Rod and Nancy Larson,
18 8504 East County Road A, Janesville, Wisconsin,
19 zip is 53546-9717, and we are in Johnstown
20 Township, Rock County.

21 MARK MELIN: Oh, good afternoon. My
22 name is Mark Melin. I live at 8608 East Rye
23 Drive, Clinton, Wisconsin 53525. Great Lakes
24 Basin is requesting authority to construct and

1 operate a rail line. Through press releases and
2 the GLB website, we know that the GLB is
3 requesting a 200-foot wide easement which
4 includes a 50-foot utility easement.

5 My first request to you is to establish
6 whether or not GLB is correct in including this
7 50-foot wide utility easement in its request to
8 the STB for approval to construct and operate a
9 rail line. GLB under revenue states,
10 quote, "As mentioned above, 50 feet of the
11 200-foot GLB right-of-way would be reserved for
12 possible use by utilities as a new right-of-way
13 to serve potential future population growth of
14 the region. This is another potential source of
15 revenue for GLB," end quote.

16 No purpose or need for this 50-foot
17 utility easement is mentioned in the Notice of
18 Intent. As a matter of fact, this utility
19 easement is not mentioned at all in the NOI. If
20 the utility easement is not within the authority
21 of the STB to approve, the 50-foot utility
22 easement should be immediately excluded.

23 Mr. Patton is on record stating that up
24 to six tracks are possible at some point in time

1 and that two tracks are capable of 110 trains
2 per day. Mr. Patton states he is planning long
3 term, he is planning for the future of his
4 grandchildren's grandchildren. If Mr. Patton is
5 looking that far in the future, so should we and
6 so should the Environmental Impact Statement.

7 The EIS should provide analysis for
8 this project when it is at full capacity.
9 Impact at the current proposed single track in
10 Rock County is vastly different than the
11 potential six tracks. The six rail tracks will
12 greatly increase the impact of noise, sight, and
13 vibrations will greatly impact our natural
14 environment in all its forms, will make at-grade
15 crossings impossible and will make the
16 likelihood of an accident that much greater.

17 Townships have had the foresight to
18 write zoning laws to keep the township rural
19 because that is what the people living here
20 want. The six rail tracks would destroy the
21 human environment we have chosen to live in.

22 If the proposed track is indeed
23 supposed to take us into our grandchildren's
24 grandchildren's future, then the EIS should

1 include analysis and the need for this track in
2 that future.

3 Mr. Patton is on record stating that
4 the rail will mainly carry ethanol, oil, coal,
5 and grain. The EIS should analyze whether it is
6 realistic to think that 100 years from now, we
7 will still depend on fossil fuels.

8 I respectfully request that the EIS
9 analyze the GLB request just as far in the
10 future as Mr. Patton does, including the
11 possibility of six rail tracks functioning at
12 capacity. Under the National Environmental
13 Policy Act, we have a duty to generations to
14 come to restore and maintain environmental
15 quality to the overall welfare and development
16 of man. Thank you.

17 SHELLEY WELLNITZ: Hello. Thank you
18 for coming and listening to our concerns. I am
19 Shelley Wellnitz, representing the third
20 generation farm of Bernard Wellnitz Farm. Our
21 farm is in Section 7 and 18 of Bradford
22 Township. The proposed railroad would take out
23 approximately one mile of our farmland.

24 Our farm was purchased as a 160-acre

1 homestead property. This approximately one mile
2 would equate to approximately 24 acres of
3 productive farmland. In 2010, in the area of
4 that proposed railroad, a waterway and tiling
5 was completed with cost sharing from the federal
6 government with efforts to create a more
7 productive field and prevent loss of soil and
8 erosion. Disturbing these waterways and tiling
9 would not only be unfair to us but the taxpayers
10 of the United States.

11 The tiling was cost shared to save that
12 land to produce more grain to feed our country,
13 and all of that money and effort would go to
14 waste and we would be right back where we
15 started from if you tear it all apart.

16 Our property would also be cut in
17 quarters as there is already an existing
18 railroad that runs east/west and took
19 approximately six acres of what started as a
20 160-acre homestead property. The proposed
21 railroad would run north/south and would land
22 lock a portion of our farm. What do you think
23 this will do to the value of this property for
24 not only us but any hope for future generations?

1 Once the farmland is gone, it can never
2 be returned. Is it truly in the betterment of
3 the community and loss of productive farm ground
4 to make it a few hours quicker around Chicago?
5 In our opinion, absolutely not. Thank you again
6 for listening.

7 TED SCHIEFELBEIN: My statement is that
8 they announced in the paper that they were only
9 going to have one line or something up here in
10 Wisconsin. There was six in Illinois. To me
11 that says they will be after six here in
12 Wisconsin within a few years, and I'd like to
13 see what their answer is on that. That's about
14 all I got. That's the one that I haven't heard
15 any mention on that. You know, and I am old
16 enough to, you know, know how they work things.
17 They get the tracks in there and they'll say we
18 are only going to add three or four more. We
19 already got the thing in there, so, that's it.

20 JUANITA HOFSTROM: What I have is more
21 or less a statement we put together. My
22 daughter is presenting. I'd like to read it out
23 to you if that's all right. The title on this
24 is "If I Were Brave, I would say this to the STB

1 Board."

2 I know about everyone in this room
3 wants this nightmare over, and they have much
4 happier things they would like to be doing.
5 Tonight we stand united asking to be heard by
6 you, the Surface Transportation Board. By a
7 show of hands, how many of you have fields that
8 will be cut into pieces that are too small to be
9 farmed by your equipment or have hills that
10 might be worked in the wrong direction causing
11 it to wash out?

12 How many are concerned because the
13 drainage of your field after the train is there
14 will cause it to dam and not drain properly or
15 your drainage tile or brooks will be affected
16 negatively?

17 How many have livestock where -- and
18 you'll be losing pastures or your barnyards are
19 too close to the proposed tracks? How many are
20 worried the crossings of the sections of your
21 fields will be dangerous and life threatening
22 because of raised beds and possible shanks of
23 equipment catching and the time to a get across
24 when the trains are proposed to come every

1 13 minutes with gearing of equipment and length
2 of equipment unable to get out of the way in
3 time?

4 How many commute to work and will be
5 affected by one or more crossings? How many are
6 worried about the closings of roads and the time
7 the emergency response takes if a train is
8 coming? How many are worried about your
9 children riding a bus that would cross one or
10 more railroad crossings by trains traveling at
11 70 miles an hour? You know that the bus is at a
12 dead stop. It has to gear up to get across the
13 tracks and there are 110 trains a day.

14 How many of you are worried about the
15 value of your land or home or farm going down?
16 Farmers need the value where it is at for
17 operating loans. If it goes down, so does the
18 operating loan.

19 How many are bothered about the
20 wildlife that will be hit by trains or spooked
21 away by it? How many are worried about the
22 pursuit of happiness for peace and quiet being
23 taken away. In the video, Frank Patton mentions
24 power lines and a pipeline which will be in this

1 200 foot right-of-way. If you are opposed to
2 these, also please give a show of hands.

3 How many of you feel a good alternative
4 would be for the tracks that are in place
5 already or abandoned to be repaired and put to
6 use striking a deal with the owner of said
7 tracks in shares if they pay to repair them.

8 If they need to go around Chicago
9 building a new track, this will cause congestion
10 no matter where you put it. I hope -- Well, I
11 hope I helped you and my concerns to be heard
12 tonight, and thank you.

13 To the STB Board, please, before
14 picking up a pen and putting it to paper,
15 remember all these hands up asking for their
16 voices to be heard by their show of hands and at
17 every meeting know the farmers feel the same.

18 MR. NAVECKY: Good evening ladies and
19 gentlemen. If I could just have your attention
20 for a minute. Good evening, folks. Good
21 evening. I just wanted to do a little rundown
22 of the format of this evening's meeting. From
23 5:30 to 6:00 o'clock, we are maintaining an open
24 house format where you can review the poster

1 boards and the maps on the tables in the back
2 and there are ten of us here to answer questions
3 you may have about the proposed project and our
4 environmental review process, so just look for
5 anyone with one of these name tags and we can
6 try and help you out as best we can.

7 At 6:00 o'clock, I'll be giving a
8 presentation about our environmental review
9 process and that will run about 30 minutes and
10 at the conclusion of that presentation, we'll
11 then have the more formal rural comment period
12 where folks who have registered to speak orally
13 will come up to the podium and provide their
14 oral comments to the project.

15 So, again, until 6:00 o'clock, we are
16 going to maintain this open format, 6:00 to 6:30
17 there will be a presentation and then at 6:30
18 we'll have the oral comment portion of the
19 meeting. Thank you.

20 MARCUS SCHARINE: Okay. My comments
21 are concerning we have a business with 100 plus
22 employees and it is on the east side of the
23 proposed track location. 80 percent of our
24 employees come from the west of the track

1 location in the Janesville area.

2 It's already very difficult to get our
3 employees to drive the 15 to 20 miles out of
4 town to our place of employment. It's a very
5 competitive workplace, and Janesville is
6 gathering more and more jobs, more warehouse
7 jobs, Dollar General is moving in. So it's
8 already difficult for us to get employees to
9 come out.

10 And my concern is that it will be even
11 more difficult to get the employees to come out
12 to work and our rates of pay will have to go up
13 higher because they will have to stop for a
14 train twice a day.

15 I know that the train company says that
16 there will only be 6 to 12 trains but the permit
17 says that there will be up to 100 trains per day
18 and in our township where we are located, it
19 will be four to five tracks wide; therefore,
20 there will be trains that are parked and it's
21 near the end of the line so I realize the trains
22 will be going slow to get to the end of the
23 line.

24 Already there are tracks in Janesville

1 that are only two and three tracks wide and when
2 they change cars, it can take as much as ten
3 minutes to change those tracks. So I believe
4 that there is a real issue there that is not
5 being straight forward.

6 I am also concerned with all the
7 freight that comes into our location. We
8 generally have four or five trucks a day
9 bringing freight in and five or six trucks a day
10 freight going out. They are all designated
11 transport for automotive industry, for dairy
12 equipment and grain equipment as our business is
13 well diversified.

14 Those are my concerns. I would hope
15 that the Committee would study this in their
16 Impact Study for the rail line -- before the
17 rail line would go in.

18 JAN MOYER: My name is Jan Moyer, and I
19 was raised on a farm north of Clinton that is
20 currently in the direct path of the proposed
21 rail. I currently live on Highway 140, a half
22 mile from where the rail crosses Turtle Creek
23 and a quarter mile from where it would cross
24 Highway 140.

1 This rolling land would need major
2 excavation to construction the rail corridor
3 that would meet the required grade for a fast
4 moving freight train. The area also has a
5 unique water table flowing through the layers of
6 limestone. The proposed rail route will cross
7 Turtle Creek, a spring fed brook on the east
8 side of Highway 140 that runs year around and
9 two drainage ditches from a spring on the
10 hillside west of Highway 140. This is on all
11 the farm that I was talking about. They are in
12 the direct path of this rail.

13 So not only will this rail permanently
14 delete a 200-foot swath of very productive
15 agricultural land along this route, it will also
16 damage the future productivity of the adjacent
17 land by changing the soil configuration and
18 water flows during the construction process.

19 I would expect this earth movement and
20 placement of bridge pilings will also adversely
21 affect the well water in the rural homes. This
22 area has had problems in the past with sand
23 contamination whenever the local gravel pits
24 start new digs. Personally I know that, my

1 well.

2 Okay. Please consider the forever
3 damage this project would invoke on the stewards
4 of the great land and water in Rock County and
5 the resulting permanent loss of food production
6 capacity.

7 I am a grain broker and I have been for
8 40 years and in the past five years, three major
9 food importers Japan, Saudi Arabia and most
10 recently China have publicly stated that they
11 need to secure not only food for their people
12 but also infrastructure and assets in foreign
13 agriculture in order to -- in order to conserve
14 their own land and water. Shouldn't we be doing
15 the same? Thank you.

16 LANCE FENA: My name is Lance Fena, and
17 my comments are I have a big concern about
18 farmers crossing the rail to get from one field
19 to the next. There may be a large chance of
20 farmer liability if they cause damage crossing
21 private property.

22 One example would be a large tractor
23 and a couple large corn buggies being driven by
24 a 15-year old crossing and derailling many cars

1 of oil or some chemical and the farmer would be
2 on the hook for liability of crossing private
3 land and it's a situation that the crossing is
4 not controlled and it would hurt the environment
5 and it would be -- you know, it would be a large
6 cost to many people, so... That is the one
7 thing.

8 And another concern is the City of
9 Milton is cut in half by rail going through the
10 city, and many times when a train is going
11 through Milton and the fire department gets a
12 call, they cannot get across the other half of
13 the city for fire or ambulance; and so if the
14 train traffic in the City of Milton would
15 double, which isn't a whole lot of increase, I
16 would assume it would go higher but if it would
17 just double, it would be disastrous for the
18 emergency teams.

19 And so those are kind of the two major
20 points for, you know, my area. Thank you.

21 ROBERT HEATH: The only thing that
22 concerns me is what's the price of my house
23 going to be worth? You know, we got an acre and
24 a half of land and we are a quarter mile from

1 the track, what's it going to do to the value of
2 our land? Is it going to be worth anything
3 after this mess?

4 Those people up there, do they really
5 know what they are talking about here tonight or
6 are they just a bunch of puppets? That's
7 enough.

8 JOEL STEINKE: I am Joel Steinke and I
9 sympathize with the farmers, but I live in the
10 City of Beloit and the sole area is depressed.
11 Beloit became depressed in the 80s and around
12 2008, Janesville became very depressed
13 economically, so this railroad is like very,
14 very important and I hope whoever listens to
15 this disregards everything that the farmers have
16 to say and just put that \$8 billion railroad
17 through. Thank you.

18 RICK JOINER: I guess I got a couple
19 different concerns. First of all, the eminent
20 domain. I believe this is a totally
21 inappropriate use of eminent domain. This is a
22 private -- private company, for-profit company.
23 It's no different than us deciding someone else
24 could take my house because that's where they

1 want to be.

2 This is not -- this is not a utility.
3 This is not a utility easement or anything of
4 that nature. It's not -- it's not for the
5 benefit of the residents in the area. It is
6 simply a for-profit business venture that is
7 inappropriate for eminent domain.

8 Also, the water flow concerns, I mean,
9 this flow -- this track goes over several
10 different types of topography and we have -- we
11 have programs in place and very strict
12 regulation on what private citizens can do as
13 far as maintaining -- as far as erosion control,
14 interrupting water flows and things of that
15 nature, and I realize they do studies and all
16 that good stuff but this is big stuff. This
17 isn't putting a ditch in or a culvert underneath
18 your driveway.

19 So I think it is too far ranging of a
20 project over too varied of topography to really
21 have a good handle on what ultimately it will do
22 with our water flows in the area. That's
23 probably about it. Let's see.

24 Oh, there is a couple other things

1 also. As far as -- as far as the safety issue,
2 I live on one of the roads that will -- that
3 runs perpendicular to the track. If I do my
4 math correctly, we are looking at 110 trains a
5 day, that's something less than five trains an
6 hour, so that track is basically a barrier.

7 If you look at five minutes, it's
8 probably longer than that five, ten minutes for
9 each train at five per hour, that only leaves
10 that open road open for half of the time. My
11 fire department comes from there, any police
12 comes from Milton so I will have a definite
13 barrier between me and safety services.

14 The next closest town would be
15 Whitewater. The distances are three times as
16 far and so I am very concerned about that also
17 and how that would be handled.

18 Additionally, I will incur costs for
19 that because I am going to be further for those
20 services to arrive to my home. Insurance costs,
21 all those kinds of things are based on distance
22 from services and if I am farther away, I just
23 don't see any reason why I should incur costs so
24 that a private for-profit company, can make

1 money. That's inappropriate.

2 Also, the safety in driving. These are
3 rural roads; and initially, they said in the
4 reports that I saw that there would be, whatever
5 they call them, flyovers, bridges over all these
6 roads. Well, obviously that's expensive but
7 that's been taken out from what I read now, so I
8 am going to have large equipment crossings on
9 rural roads. I think that it's a huge safety
10 concern and I want to know how they are doing
11 it, how they are going to handle that.

12 Currently, railroad tracks on KK are
13 not -- they are not controlled intersections.
14 There is simply a stop sign there and at one
15 time not that long ago there weren't even stop
16 signs, just simply railroad cross blocks so I
17 want to know specifically how in each -- at each
18 intersection how that's going to be handled. I
19 think that's it.

20 DAN MILLER: Dan Miller. My name is
21 Dan Miller. We have a piece of property on
22 Lakeshore Road. The proposed route that Great
23 Lakes Basin is going to come across would be
24 right on our property line. We are not involved

1 in any way with the taking of our property,
2 however, they are planning on putting an
3 elevated rail within 55 feet of our -- that and
4 within 55 feet of our homes where my family
5 lives and children sleep and everything like
6 that. I don't believe that's necessary and/or
7 safe.

8 We won't be able to continue to live
9 there. There is many ramifications of that.
10 Our house will be worth nothing which has
11 nothing to do with this but we'll have to
12 purchase another piece of land in the country
13 which also doesn't help with farm preservation
14 or anything of that nature. We won't be there.

15 I just -- I don't understand the need
16 for all of this, but this gets a little
17 emotional because we moved out of Beloit so we
18 could have a nice quiet place for our children
19 to grow up and it will no longer be a nice, safe
20 or quiet place for my children to grow up.

21 As far as it affects our friends, it
22 affects our neighbors, there is farming
23 community all the way around us. It just severs
24 everything and it just really makes a mess out

1 of our corner of the county. I don't know. It
2 needs to go away, so...

3 BILL BREITSPRECHER: Bill
4 Breitsprecher. It's William on the paperwork
5 but Bill. Great Lakes Basin Transportation,
6 this is a house of cards. The chief promoter
7 has no experience, background in rail roading in
8 any way at all. He did hire a rail consultant,
9 but he doesn't actually have any experience in
10 background and the logistics of creating a new
11 railroad and diverting the kind of traffic that
12 will be necessary.

13 This should have never gotten to a
14 hearing stage at the Surface Transportation
15 Board because it's not a legitimate proposal.
16 But more importantly, they are abusing the
17 process and they haven't intentionally put
18 forward a plan that changes all the time, the
19 details are not consistent and I'm upset about
20 this because it means people like me and you can
21 see this room is full and most of us are going
22 to be against this rail project but the railroad
23 has not been honest about their intentions,
24 hasn't released any details.

1 They hide behind claims of
2 nondisclosure, which is their choice to put into
3 the contract. Nobody actually knows what this
4 project is about and they keep changing their
5 public statements, so when they need to impress
6 people that there is a big need for this
7 railroad, they claim that they will hand divert
8 110 trains a day. That's, you know, more than a
9 hundred cars per train, that's 11,000 car loads
10 at least. They claim it will be one quarter of
11 all of the freight that comes from Chicago.
12 That's what they say when they need to convince
13 somebody of the need.

14 When they are talking to somebody
15 about -- that has environmental concerns, then
16 they say, oh, no. That's wildly too high. It's
17 only going to be 16 trains a day and this is
18 what they actually said just a few days ago. So
19 anyone that's come here to testify or present
20 comments, we are at a disadvantage because
21 everything the railroad has said publicly is
22 subject to immediately change when it suits
23 their purposes.

24 Surface Transportation Board should

1 have seen through that this was not a litigate
2 plan and not allowed it to get to this point
3 until the management team had a consistent plan.

4 My concern is that people forget the
5 American Railroad Network was created more than
6 a hundred years ago. There hasn't been a
7 project like this for almost a hundred years,
8 more than a hundred years and people forget the
9 railroad infrastructure was developed largely
10 through financial scandal and outright scams.

11 What happens is promoters come in, they
12 sell people on the idea of the railroad, they
13 raise money, they make boatloads of money, then
14 they are out. Then there is construction
15 interests that come in and build the railroad,
16 they make boatloads of money.

17 When the proponents behind this
18 railroad wanted to convince everyone what a
19 great idea it was and why they were the people
20 to do it, they claim that they needed more than
21 \$8 billion and they even said they had this
22 financing lined up. Well, just a few days ago
23 they had to come clean on that lie. They don't
24 have anywhere near \$8 billion and now they are

1 being fuzzy how much it will cost.

2 I am sure actually it will cost closer
3 to the \$8 billion because whether they haul ten
4 trains a day or 110 trains a day, they are going
5 to build a 70-mile per hour double track
6 railroad, the costs are the same whether they
7 run one train or a gazillion trains. The
8 project just isn't on the up and up that way.

9 Of course I guess it's federal
10 regulations or, you know, the feds who
11 government allows railroads to claim they need a
12 hundred feet for each track. That's where the
13 200-foot wide right-of-way comes from. We are
14 talking about -- they are talking about a double
15 track railroad. Then they are also talking
16 about sticking on 50 feet for pipelines or blah,
17 blah, something. They are not specific on
18 anything.

19 How can anyone ask legitimate
20 environmental questions when the railroad itself
21 is changing the proposing structure, so there
22 are no concrete details. They claim they cannot
23 give us any concrete details and they shift the
24 answers whenever it suits their purpose.

1 Now, in reality there has to be
2 somebody directly or indirectly behind this.
3 Some other business interest and it would have
4 to be connected to the railroad industry, so I'm
5 not going to mention this in my testimony. I
6 only have three minutes when I talked to them,
7 but somebody is behind this and this is being
8 hidden from the public.

9 Most likely it is Canadian Pacific
10 which needs a connection from the bakken
11 coalfields through Chicago to Norfolk Southern
12 to some eastern market which will give them
13 access to the Gulf of Mexico or to the east
14 coast, any of the ports on the east coast.

15 The promotion appears to be just
16 outright dishonest, intellectually dishonest and
17 the money is far too much capital for an
18 operating railroad to pay off.

19 What happens and what happened with
20 every railroad development in this country,
21 every main line that exists today consists of
22 segments of smaller rail roads that were built
23 exactly like this.

24 A fraudulent promoter sells the public

1 on the idea. Huge amounts of money are ponied
2 up. That money disappears for the construction,
3 the railroad is now saddled with debt that it
4 will never possibly be able to earn and then it
5 files bankruptcy and some other interest
6 acquires that property for literally a penny or
7 two on the dollar and that's what's happening
8 here.

9 If there was any integrity to the
10 proposal, they wouldn't be telling us one day it
11 was 110 trains, 44,000 cars at least a day or,
12 you know, 16 trains and because there is not a
13 single railroad that runs into or through
14 Chicago, that has indicated they want to bypass
15 their freight, they are not going to achieve
16 even ten trains a day.

17 This is nothing. In order to make it
18 work, they will have to condemn property and the
19 laws were never created to allow private
20 corporations to exploit people, take their lands
21 for tiny sums of money for multi-billion dollar
22 scams and that's what that is.

23 And people need to remember if you look
24 at the history how the Union Pacific was

1 developed, every rail line was developed, the
2 1800s, early 1900s, the Milwaukee Road had a
3 transcontinental line. This is just a scam
4 where the promoters make out, the construction
5 companies make boatloads of money, they have no
6 real business plan.

7 And Surface Transportation Board has no
8 business having hearings because it is very
9 obvious that they actually have no specific
10 details at all and any environmental concerns
11 that's brought today, the railroad promoters
12 will dismiss by just making up something new
13 about their plans. This is just fraudulent.

14 (End of comments provided to
15 reporter one-on-one.

16 Beginning of presentation and oral
17 public comments.)

18 MR. GRAVES: Welcome everybody. Good
19 evening and thank you for joining us for this
20 public meeting tonight on the Great Lakes Basin
21 Rail Environmental Impact Statements Scoping
22 Process. We have, as David mentioned just a
23 minute ago, we got a two-prong format tonight.

24 Basically we will have Dave do a

1 presentation on the program and the process and
2 then we'll take oral comments on that. As we
3 get started for oral comments, I'll provide some
4 instruction guidelines for you to help make the
5 process go a little more smoothly, so with that,
6 I'd like to turn the meeting over to Mr. Dave
7 Navecky of the Surface Transportation Board,
8 Office of the Environmental Analysis.

9 MR. NAVECKY: Thank you. Can everybody
10 hear me okay? Welcome to this evening's
11 meeting. This is the scoping meeting for the
12 Environmental Impact Statement on the proposed
13 Great Lakes Basin Rail Line project. Next
14 slide, please.

15 So this is what we are going to cover
16 this evening. We will go through a few
17 introductions of who I am and we have the two
18 folks up here. We will do an overview of the
19 Surface Transportation Board and who we are and
20 what we do. We will go review the environmental
21 review process for this proposed project, then
22 we will address the purpose and the need for the
23 proposed project as well as we will provide a
24 description of what the Great Lakes Basin, Inc.

1 has proposed, then we are going to go over some
2 websites that you might find useful.

3 I think they will be good resources for
4 you folks as you try to learn more about this
5 project and participate in our environmental
6 review process.

7 So the next slide. Introductions,
8 again, my name is Dave Navecky. I am with the
9 Surface Transportation Board and the Office of
10 Environmental Analysis. We are the office
11 responsible for our agency complying with
12 environmental rules. I am the office's lead in
13 preparation of the EIS so it's my job to listen
14 to you folks and find out what issues or
15 underlines that we should be addressing during
16 our environmental review.

17 Also here this evening is Phillis
18 Johnson-Ball. She is the Deputy Director for
19 the Office of Environmental Analysis and we have
20 eight other folks here this evening. They are
21 with a consulting firm called ICF International.
22 They are going to be assisting us in the
23 preparation of this Environmental Impact
24 Statement.

1 It's going to be a large document.
2 There are many complex issues that we need to
3 address and a small agency such as mine just
4 doesn't have the resources to complete a project
5 like this.

6 The project manager for the ICF team is
7 Alan Summerville, and he is here at the table
8 and he has seven other folks that have been
9 helping with the meeting, answering questions
10 and getting you folks registered. Next slide,
11 please.

12 The Surface Transportation Board, who
13 we are? We are a small federal agency based in
14 Washington, DC. Our jurisdiction is the
15 economic regulation of the freight railroad
16 industry so whenever a rail line wants to
17 construct and operate a new rail line, they need
18 to get authority from our agency to do that.

19 In considering a project such as this,
20 the Agency, the Board members, we have three
21 Board members, they will consider two main
22 issues. They will consider the potential
23 environmental impacts of the project which is
24 why we are here tonight and they will also

1 consider the transportation merits of the
2 project which I know is of concern of a lot of
3 you folks but that is being addressed by other
4 offices within our agency.

5 They will take the concerns that you
6 folks have about purpose and need and that will
7 be considered during the transportation merits
8 of the review of the project.

9 So when the environmental review is
10 completed, which is kind of the long pole in the
11 tent, it takes longer to complete the
12 environmental review. I have estimated it will
13 take at least two or three years before we
14 complete the environmental review process that
15 we are starting tonight. That's the long pole
16 in the tent. It takes longer to go through that
17 process than it does my agency to consider the
18 transportation merits.

19 So when all that work is done, the
20 Agency will vote. There are three members, they
21 will vote and they will decide whether to deny
22 the project, to approve the project or approve
23 the project with conditions including
24 environmental mitigation. Next slide, please.

1 So I'd like to go over our
2 environmental review process. We initiated the
3 process called Scoping where we sent out notices
4 on March 18th that formally initiated our
5 Environmental Impact Statement process and the
6 purpose of scoping is to reach out to federal,
7 state and local agencies and local communities
8 in the vicinity of the proposed rail line and
9 ask your assistance in helping us identify the
10 issues and concerns that should be addressed in
11 our environmental review.

12 We all come from Washington, as I
13 mentioned. We are not familiar with your local
14 agency or local issues and so it's important for
15 us to come out and meet the community and have
16 you identify the potential environmental impacts
17 that we should be addressing.

18 Last week we were in eastern Illinois
19 and northwestern Indiana and one issue that was
20 brought to our attention was the impact of the
21 proposed rail line on drainage tiles on farming
22 operations, and I really wasn't too familiar
23 with that issue until last week but now we know
24 it's an issue we are going to have to look at

1 closely and how the proposed rail line would
2 impact those drainage tiles and what ways might
3 be available to us to mitigate those impacts.

4 Another reason we are here tonight is
5 to have you folks suggest alternative routes for
6 the proposed rail line. The Surface
7 Transportation Board will be looking at that
8 ourselves, but if you have suggestions on
9 alternative routes that we should look at, we
10 would be eager to hear what those are.

11 The environmental review process
12 requires us to not only look at the route on the
13 map in back that the Great Lakes Basin has
14 proposed but we are required to look at
15 alternatives, and those alternatives are -- they
16 are -- all the alternatives are reviewed
17 equally. We give no preference to the route
18 that's been proposed by Great Lakes Basin. They
19 are all assessed equally as to the same level of
20 detail. We give no preference to the
21 alternatives.

22 So if you have any suggestions on
23 alternatives routes, we'd like to hear those.
24 If you have any suggestions on potential

1 mitigation for the project, you are concerned
2 about a specific impact and you want to suggest
3 that if the project were to move forward, we
4 should require that Great Lakes substitute X, Y
5 and Z to reduce or avoid those impacts.

6 So you are here tonight to hear about
7 our process and the Board and to provide us with
8 scoping comments all related to issues,
9 alternatives and mitigation. We encourage you
10 to, if you are not going to speak tonight, we
11 encourage you to submit written comments.

12 The more written comments we attain,
13 the clearer idea we have of what the issues are
14 so we encourage you to all write questions.
15 Don't assume that you have an issue that
16 somebody else is going to make that comment. I
17 encourage you to send those comments in. There
18 is never a bad comment.

19 So at the conclusion of the scoping
20 period, which comments are due by June 15th,
21 we'll take all those comments about potential
22 impacts and alternatives and mitigation and we
23 will turn that into a document that we refer to
24 as the Final Scope of Study, and that will

1 identify all the issues that we will review
2 during our environmental review process.

3 It will also identify the alternatives
4 that we are going to study, so you are going to
5 know those upfront. The alternatives that are
6 going to be studied, the routes proposed by
7 Great Lakes Basin and then the additional routes
8 that we come up with with your assistance and we
9 also study -- I want to point out we also study
10 the no action alternative, which is not building
11 the rail line at all. Next slide, please.

12 So after we finish the final scope of
13 study, we actually begin doing the actual
14 environmental review work. We'll do the data
15 clenching. There is going to be a lot of data
16 that we need to collect from your local agencies
17 from local farm bureaus from state agencies,
18 federal agencies, there will be this data we
19 collect on our own from aerial photography.
20 There could be field work that needs to be done
21 related to wetlands or archeological surveys.

22 We will be doing noise modeling. There
23 is a poster board in the back which identify all
24 of the topics which at minimal we'll be

1 addressing during this environmental review and
2 so, you know, folks are asking specifics on if
3 we are going to be doing noise modeling. We
4 will come out and do some baseline monitoring of
5 noise and we'll monitor noise and we will
6 provide those modeling results in the
7 Environmental Impact Statement so you'll be able
8 to see directly what the noise impacts might be
9 on your home if you live nearby.

10 We'll be looking at traffic delays at
11 crossings. We will be looking at delays for
12 school buses. We will be looking at delays for
13 emergency response providers, for fire,
14 emergency medical services, police departments.
15 We'll be looking at air quality. So the study
16 will be very comprehensive and we will be
17 addressing all those issues.

18 The draft EIS will be submitted and we
19 will be coming up with preliminary mitigation.
20 That's mitigation that we developed to address
21 the potential impacts that we have identified
22 during the process, and we also will be
23 incorporating the mitigation suggestions that
24 you folks might provide us during this scoping

1 process.

2 We will take all that information and
3 we will prepare and issue the draft EIS and when
4 that document is ready, we will notify you
5 folks. If you have signed up to be on our
6 notification list whether it's by E-mail or
7 regular mail, you'll see a notice that the draft
8 EIS is available and where you can go to see
9 that document. It will be up on the internet
10 for you to review.

11 We'll also send you copies. We'll send
12 out CDs to the local libraries so if folks want
13 to access it there, we'll do that. The draft
14 EIS will be issued for a public comment period
15 similar to what we are doing here. I am not
16 sure what the comment period will be as far as
17 duration, but we will be back out here in the
18 project area after the draft EIS is issued to
19 hear from you directly, your comments on the
20 draft EIS. Did we miss something? Are the
21 impacts we come up with not realistic? We
22 underestimated something. We didn't look at
23 this alternative close enough. Those are type
24 of comments we'll be interested in hearing from

1 you folks.

2 Then again, we always encourage people
3 to submit written comments on our documents and
4 we'll take all those comments and we will
5 address all those comments, next slide, please,
6 when we prepare the final Environmental Impact
7 Statement, whether we need to just do some
8 additional work data collection, do some
9 modeling. We will issue the final EIS that
10 responds to all those comments that we get from
11 you folks as well as the comments we are likely
12 to get from all the various federal, state and
13 local agencies with an interest in this proposed
14 project.

15 With the final EIS done, likely by that
16 time, the folks in our office that are
17 considering the transportation merits of the
18 project will have completed their review, so the
19 Board will then make its final decision. It
20 will consider the entire environmental record
21 which is the draft EIS, all your comments on the
22 draft EIS, as well as the contents of the final
23 EIS.

24 I forgot to mention that in the final

1 EIS, the office which I work, the Office of
2 Environmental Analysis, will be making some
3 recommendations and one of the recommendations
4 will be a preferred alternative based on the
5 potential environmental impacts and what that
6 will essentially state is if the Board chooses
7 to license this project, chooses to approve this
8 project, we recommend that they approve the
9 preferred alternative, the preferred alternative
10 that we have identified based on the
11 environmental impacts and they typically if they
12 do license the project, they typically select
13 our preferred alternative.

14 We also have recommendations on
15 mitigation in the final EIS and it will
16 specifically provide a detailed list of
17 mitigation measures. In this case, they are
18 likely to be hundreds of pages long and we
19 recommend to them if they choose to approve this
20 project, that they impose all the mitigation in
21 its entirety and, again, if they approved a
22 project, they typically adopt our entire
23 mitigation package and they often add some of
24 their own mitigation.

1 So the Board reaches its final decision
2 considering the entire environmental record as
3 well as the transportation merits, conclusions
4 that were reached by other folks in our agency,
5 and as I mentioned before, they will decide
6 whether to deny the project, approve the project
7 or approve the project with conditions including
8 environmental mitigation.

9 Then it will be up to other federal
10 agencies to make decisions and we know that the,
11 for example, the Corps of Engineers will need to
12 make a decision related to the potential wetland
13 impacts. They will issue a decision after ours
14 and the Coast Guard will also need to make a
15 decision related to the major river crossings
16 along the proposed route and they are likely to
17 be the other -- to the other federal decisions,
18 federal agencies that are involved in this
19 process as we go down that review. Next slide,
20 please.

21 Applicant's Proposed Action, and the
22 reason we have this titled Applicant's Proposed
23 Action, the applicant referring to the Great
24 Lakes Basin Transportation folks is that this

1 project is their project. This is my -- This is
2 not my agency's project. We did not come up
3 with this project. We do not identify a need
4 for this project. We do not define the purpose
5 of the project. This is coming solely from the
6 Great Lakes Basin folks.

7 And as a licensing agency, our -- the
8 Surface Transportation Board is required to
9 respond to requests for authority to construct
10 new rail lines and the first step in that
11 process because it takes so long is the
12 environmental review process.

13 So let's see. So what they have
14 proposed -- Did we miss the purpose slide?
15 Wasn't that before this one? It's after. Can
16 you see if it's in there? There it is.

17 So this is the purpose of the need for
18 the project as provided to us by Great Lakes
19 folks. Provide Class I railroads and a regional
20 railroad in Wisconsin and southern and there is
21 another regional railroad in Indiana that
22 currently utilize the Chicago metropolitan rail
23 network with a bypass route around that
24 congested rail line.

1 The proposed rail line they believe
2 would also add capacity to the regional rail
3 network that would accommodate existing and
4 future rail roads and this is coming from the
5 Great Lakes Basin folks, and these are the type
6 of topics that my agency will consider during
7 the transportation merit -- review of the
8 transportation merits of the project. Next
9 slide, please.

10 So this is the proposed action,
11 proposed action basically being the proposed
12 rail line. In this case, the route that they
13 have on the map that I believe all of you have
14 seen is about 278 miles long and extends from
15 southern Wisconsin down through Illinois turns
16 east, northeast and then enters northwest
17 Indiana and ends near La Porte, Indiana.

18 Much of the line would be double
19 tracked but the section -- most of the section
20 in Wisconsin would be single tracked. Their
21 general expectation, from my understanding, is
22 that there would be less traffic, less train
23 traffic with their proposal at the end of the
24 rail line so they don't need the whole track in

1 Wisconsin, for example.

2 A section of it would be triple tracked
3 in Illinois near Manteno where they would also
4 propose to construct and operate a rail terminal
5 to provide for switching of the trains, to
6 provide maintenance and servicing of the
7 locomotives and the rail cars, both the
8 equipment that belongs to them and they would
9 offer that up to their customers as well. Next
10 slide, please.

11 And this is a map I'm pretty sure you
12 have all seen by now. It's, again, from
13 southern Wisconsin going around the east side of
14 Rockford, heading south and turning east and
15 going into northwestern Indiana. Next slide,
16 please.

17 So we have two websites that I think
18 will be useful for you folks as you try to keep
19 informed about this project and where we are
20 going with our environmental review process as
21 well as the review on the transportation merits,
22 and the first one I want to point out is our
23 agency's website and I think the web address is
24 on the brochure that was available to you at the

1 front door. That's www.stb.dot.gov and it's
2 here on our website that you can file your
3 spoken comments with us electronically; and when
4 we do eventually issue the draft EIS, you'll be
5 able to submit your comments on the draft EIS
6 through this website as well, and if you'd like,
7 you can always mail the comments to me by US
8 mail.

9 Our agency tries to be very transparent
10 in our process. We don't try to hide anything,
11 so on the environmental review side, all
12 correspondence that we receive on this project
13 from outside our agency including E-mail and
14 letters all goes up on our website so you can
15 see what other people are saying about the
16 project and all correspondence going out from
17 our agency on the environmental review process
18 whether it's letters or E-mails also goes on
19 there and included in that is any correspondence
20 that we have with the Great Lakes Basin folks as
21 it pertains to the environmental review process
22 will be up there for you to see.

23 So anytime -- We will typically
24 correspond with them formally by letter. Those

1 outgoing letters will appear on that website and
2 their reply in writing back to us will go up on
3 that website, so you'll be able to see what's
4 going on between the two parties.

5 We also have on there the more formal
6 part of the process which is related to the
7 transportation merits and all the filings that
8 come and go on that are also available that you
9 can find on the agency website. Next slide,
10 please.

11 So this is a project specific website
12 that we launched on March 18th, "we" being the
13 Surface Transportation Board, this is our
14 website, to provide you with information about
15 our environmental review process and provide you
16 some resources that might be useful to you and,
17 again, provides a background on our
18 environmental review process.

19 We'll be providing key documents in the
20 process that we think you would be interested
21 in. Again, all the documents will be back on
22 our agency website but key documents that we
23 think you might be interested in, we'll be
24 posting them on here as well.

1 For example, on March 7th of this year
2 is when we got the current alignment from the
3 Great Lakes folks and put that alignment up on
4 the website. With that alignment and the Great
5 Lakes folks, we got a 22-page narrative which
6 describes the proposed rail line section by
7 section and how they came up with that
8 alignment. That's all available on this project
9 website as well as our agency website.

10 We also have a page up there up on maps
11 that you might find useful. The maps that you
12 are seeing in the back are up on that website,
13 and we also have a file on there that's usable
14 with Google Earth, so you just click on that
15 file. If you are familiar with Google Earth,
16 you can go on there and move around and zoom in
17 really close to the proposed alignment and see
18 how it might affect your home or your farm, and
19 I think that's it. Next slide.

20 So next we are going to go into the
21 oral comment portion.

22 MR. GRAVES: I hope the battery didn't
23 die. All right. We are going to get started on
24 our oral comment portion of tonight's meeting.

1 I'll just do a little rundown on the process for
2 you.

3 Before I do that, I notice that there
4 is quite a few people here. We got right now
5 about 45 cards up here for folks who want to
6 speak so we got quite a good list of folks that
7 want to speak. There are restrooms here above
8 that door over to my left and up the hallway
9 coming turning left up the hallway there, you'll
10 see them right away. There is also water
11 fountains over there and water fountains over
12 here as well, so just the facilities rundown for
13 you.

14 If you came in and signed up but didn't
15 sign up to speak this evening, you can still
16 come up to speak after everybody has -- whose
17 card I have here we will make space for folks to
18 come on up if you want to speak following that.

19 We also have a court reporter as you
20 see up here and she is here to transcribe your
21 comments for use in preparing the draft EIS so
22 this is a public forum and a public process and
23 if you don't want personal information appearing
24 in there that you don't want in a draft

1 statement, please don't provide that information
2 while you are speaking.

3 Just a couple quick ground rules in
4 terms of how the speaking and oral comment
5 process will intended to work tonight. It will
6 help the court reporter and us if you say your
7 name and spell your name so that we get that
8 accurately recorded and then speak slowly so
9 that the court reporter can follow along and get
10 an accurate transcription of your oral comments.

11 We are going to try to allocate three
12 minutes for each speaker. You obviously don't
13 need to use three minutes; but if you do,
14 Tiffany will give you a little head's up on when
15 you have 30 seconds remaining and then when your
16 time is up, she'll give you the big red stop
17 sign there.

18 We have quite a lot of folks who want
19 to speak tonight so out of respect for everybody
20 here, please try to stick to the three-minute
21 allocated timeframe. If you think you are going
22 to spend more than three minutes, try to order
23 your comments so that the most important
24 comments at least from your perspective you go

1 with first and of course, there is other ways to
2 provide comments if you don't want to speak
3 tonight.

4 We'll have comment stations in the back
5 of the room, I think there is some in the back
6 over here and of course you can certainly speak
7 to the court reporter afterwards as well. There
8 is also, as David mentioned, an opportunity to
9 comment on the website for the project and of
10 course you can submit your comments by written
11 or US postal mail service.

12 So what I'd like to do, as we get
13 started, I am going to start initially with a
14 couple of folks we will call up two names and we
15 will have one person sit here and one person
16 speaks and after each person speaks, I'll call
17 up the next person to come and stage here so
18 that will help get the flow going relatively
19 smoothly and make sure that we have a reasonably
20 efficient process through all of the comments.

21 This portion of the meeting is not
22 intended to provide a question and answer
23 process. If you would like to do questions and
24 answers, certainly after the meeting Dave and

1 Phillis and the rest of the team will be
2 available to answer your questions until it's
3 time to leave. I think -- I am not sure we
4 have -- if there is a time limit tonight in
5 terms of the facility. I think 9:30, 10:00
6 o'clock, something like that, is when the
7 custodians need to leave.

8 Also, just to note, it's pretty warm in
9 here and apparently there was some air
10 conditioner maintenance going on today so they
11 have the fans going on but there is obviously no
12 air conditioning so we apologize about the
13 inconvenience of that. So I'd like to call up
14 State Representative Amy Loudenbeck and also
15 Theresa Huber.

16 AMY LOUDENBECK: Thank you. And good
17 evening and I appreciate that you have come to
18 our County to listen to the public comments. My
19 name is Amy Loudenbeck and I am elected to serve
20 in the Wisconsin State Assembly. My district is
21 Assembly District 31 and it includes
22 southeastern Rock and southwestern Walworth
23 counties so the townships of Clinton, Bradford
24 and Johnstown which along the route are in my

1 assembly district and considering any
2 alternative routes that would be in 30 miles of
3 the route, that would all cover my district as
4 well.

5 And so the comments that I would like
6 to share this evening, I will likely submit
7 additional comments in writing, but in the
8 interest of time a couple things that I want to
9 make sure are evaluated under socioeconomic
10 impacts, when you do the EIS, I would expect
11 that you will be looking at impacts to the ag
12 industry, lost income, lost sales but also how
13 this would effect existing railroads in
14 Wisconsin.

15 And then another socioeconomic impact
16 I'd like you to consider is what would happen in
17 the event of a bankruptcy of the owner of the
18 railroad? That has happened to us in Wisconsin
19 within my lifetime and the State ended up having
20 to step up with the counties and maintain that
21 service and so I think that that is a realistic
22 consideration, and I hope that you will look at
23 that.

24 Land use, Rock County has town zoning

1 so all of the towns kind of have their own smart
2 growth comprehensive plans and I believe like a
3 railroad would be a conditional use under some
4 of those plans. Some of them may not allow it
5 but as far as the zoning goes, that's how it
6 works in Wisconsin and in Rock County. In
7 Wisconsin some counties are county zoning. Rock
8 County is town zoning, so I would hope you would
9 consider that.

10 And then finally, taxes. In Wisconsin,
11 local property taxes pay for schools, police and
12 fire protection, technical colleges and roads.
13 Railroads are not taxed at the local level in
14 Wisconsin so any displaced property value as a
15 result of reduced property value, as a result of
16 eminent domain, taking people's land and
17 reducing their property value, that would not be
18 able to be recouped on the local level and so
19 those may be unique to Wisconsin and I, again, I
20 appreciate your time and consideration. If my
21 office can be of any assistance, please let me
22 know. Thank you.

23 THERESA HUBER: Hello, my name Theresa
24 Huber. T-H-E-R-E-S-A H-U-B-E-R. And, Dear

1 Members of the Surface Transportation Board, I
2 am here before you tonight to request that you
3 take into careful consideration each of the
4 issues and concerns that have been presented to
5 you and will continue to be presented to the
6 Surface Transportation Board and public scoping
7 meetings.

8 Comments sent to the Surface
9 Transportation Board's website and sent to the
10 Surface Transportation Board in written form via
11 United States postal service. I heard what you
12 said. We just want you to know that we plan to
13 follow up and we really hope you take our
14 concerns to heart.

15 The concerns and requests are very real
16 and very important to the people, communities
17 and the economies and the environments that will
18 be affected now, will continue to be well so
19 into the future. This is a multi-faceted,
20 highly charged issue that potentially has many
21 negative impacts on many different levels that
22 the proposed route of this rail if approved as
23 is currently being pursued. These issues
24 include the ramifications on the agriculture

1 businesses and rural communities in which this
2 rail is currently proposed to be built.

3 This project will take precious
4 farmland that can never be replaced or
5 replicated. My understanding is that one of the
6 items to be hauled is to be oil, a nonrenewable
7 resource which will be hauled over another
8 nonrenewable resource, our developed
9 agriculture.

10 When an infrastructure is involved,
11 transportations are in much needed restructuring
12 and updating now and for the future of commerce
13 and this nation, it is also the responsibility
14 of our government agencies to remember and
15 protect the agricultural commerce of this
16 nation. It is the responsibility of our various
17 government agencies to protect our environment,
18 land resources and the people who will be
19 directly affected by the effects that would be
20 caused by the building of this rail on this
21 path.

22 The short-term effects are frightening.
23 The long-term effects are irrevocable. When
24 fossil fuels are no longer available, needed or

1 possibly allowed, this rail has outlived its
2 usefulness, it will leave behind a wasteland
3 that is currently one of this nation's most
4 precious and productive resources, the farmland
5 on which crops are grown and animals are raised
6 to feed the people in this nation and other
7 nations.

8 Other routes for this rail line need to
9 be explored, routes that will accomplish what
10 Great Lakes Basin Transportation would like to
11 accomplish which have the least amount of
12 negative impact on the safety, the economic
13 resources and the lives that will be impacted if
14 this current route is approved.

15 Some of the direct impacts
16 environmentally include our soil, our water, the
17 contamination of them in case of an accident.
18 Also, the direct impact high speed rail will
19 have on oil and natural gas pipelines already in
20 place that this rail may run over.

21 At some point during this
22 decision-making process ahead of you, one other
23 thing needs to be taken into account. At what
24 point does the will or wants of one entity get

1 to push aside the economical basis of
2 agriculture living of the American farmer and
3 also invade the environment and communities that
4 many call home?

5 I thank you for your time and your
6 careful consideration during the
7 decision-process making you have ahead of you
8 and I thank you from the bottom of all of your
9 hearts. Thank you.

10 KEN LUETY: I forgot to pay attention
11 but I am Ken Luety, L-U-E-T-Y. With that, I'd
12 like to welcome everyone tonight. I am sure all
13 of you are like me. A month ago, none of us
14 thought that we would be sitting here tonight
15 and learning all this about railroads that we
16 have learned in the last 30 days, and I'd also
17 like to comment there is probably a lot of
18 farmers that would like to be here tonight that
19 can't because they are probably out working in
20 the field because spring has sprung and I kind
21 of question why they did this in the spring
22 which is our busiest time but with that, I'd
23 like to get on with my prepared statement.

24 My same is Ken Luety, and I am in the

1 business of farming. The current proposal for
2 the railroad, through railroads, cuts through
3 one of my fields on an angle turning what is now
4 one large rectangular field into three pieces,
5 one large and two smaller triangle fields.

6 Not only am I losing productive farm
7 ground, but the proposal made is inefficient to
8 farm this field and creates many point rows.
9 Getting a 60-foot planter into a point row is
10 very difficult and an inefficient way to plant
11 corn and soybeans. I also don't know that I
12 will have access to the smaller fields. Rail
13 crossing for large farm equipment may be
14 impossible.

15 The proposal also limits my ability to
16 put cattle on this land because they won't be
17 able to cross the tracks to get to the smaller
18 parcels. I invested a lot of time and
19 development into developing my farm. The farm
20 is grid samples, uses prescription seed and
21 fertilizer based on yield history and soil type
22 developed over time. It's in the Farmland
23 Preservation Program and that's the conservation
24 plan and for fertility and erosion. With the

1 rail project, I'll lose the land, efficiency and
2 income.

3 We need to project this farmland for
4 development and keep it for the purpose of
5 growing food which is what it does best. Please
6 consider alternatives such as upgrading existing
7 rail lines or reactivating retired lines in
8 order to preserve our farm ground.

9 The cost/benefit analysis related to
10 permanent loss of farm ground versus the desire
11 to transport commodities faster should be part
12 of the EIS along with a study of the long-term
13 economic impact of rural communities in Rock
14 County that are in the path of this project.

15 I think all of us have a little bit of
16 a beef with how we found out about this project.
17 I think the Agency sent out over 1600 letters to
18 various boards and agencies. None of them had
19 any potential landowners. I have heard
20 Mr. Patton quoted in different papers as saying,
21 if you don't want to sell, we'll buy the
22 neighbor's farm. Well, that's not going to work
23 with a railway. We all know that. They are
24 going to use eminent domain.

1 With that, I don't think they have been
2 very transparent on what they are doing and I
3 think the word that I'd like to use is that we
4 have been railroaded, and I don't know that I am
5 ready for that right or wanting that right.

6 In closing, I am not going to be the
7 first farm to sell, I am not going to be the
8 last farm to sell, I am just not going to sell.
9 Thank you.

10 JUANITA HOFSTROM: Hello. I am Juanita
11 Hofstrom. Kenny is a big farmer. We are
12 smaller farmers. We are just a twinkle in the
13 farmer's eye but we have some of the same goals
14 to have good land, to have good products, to
15 raise animals, to equate our children with
16 agriculture. All of those things count a lot.

17 Now, in this particular thing that I am
18 going to propose I would like your help for me.
19 I would like for you to help me demonstrate to
20 the group here what some of the things are
21 critical to us. Many of these have been
22 mentioned before and have come from this podium
23 but I'd like to have you give your response by a
24 showing of hands for some of the questions I am

1 going to ask so they can see how you are
2 affected personally by some of the things that
3 are going to be happening to us.

4 This one is titled, "If I were Brave, I
5 would say this to the STB Board." I know about
6 everyone in this room wants this nightmare over
7 and they have much happier things they would
8 like to be doing. Tonight we stand united
9 asking to be heard by you, the Surface
10 Transportation Board, and we'd like to show a
11 show of hands.

12 How many of you have fields that will
13 be cut into pieces too small to be farmed by
14 your equipment? Raise your hands if this counts
15 for you. How many of you have hills that will
16 be worked in the wrong direction now causing it
17 to wash out? How many are concerned that the
18 drainage of your field after the train is there
19 will cause it to dam and not drain properly or
20 your drainage tile and brooks will be affected
21 negatively?

22 How many have livestock that will be
23 losing pastures or barnyards too close to the
24 proposed tracks? How many are worried the

1 crossings to the other sections of your fields
2 will be dangerous and life threatening because
3 of raised beds and possible shanks of equipment
4 catching and the time to get across when the
5 trains are proposed to come every 13 minutes
6 with your gearing of equipment and length of
7 equipment unable to get out of the way in time.

8 How many commute to work and will be
9 affected by one or more crossings? How many are
10 worried about the closing of roads and the time
11 for emergency response if a train is coming?
12 How many are worried about your children riding
13 a bus that will cross a crossing knowing the bus
14 is at a dead stop and it has to gear up to get
15 across the tracks? How many people would worry
16 about their children in those cases?

17 How many of you are worried about the
18 value of your land or your home or a farm going
19 down? Farmers need the value where it's at for
20 operating loans. If it goes down so does the
21 operating loan. How many are worried about the
22 wildlife that will be hit by trains or spooked
23 away by it? How many are worried about the
24 pursuit of happiness with peace and quiet being

1 taken away?

2 In the video Frank Patton also mentions
3 power lines and a pipeline gained and put into
4 this 200-foot right-of-way. If you are opposed
5 to these, please also show us a show of hands.

6 How many of you feel a good alternative
7 would be for the tracks that are in place
8 already or abandoned to be repaired and put to
9 use, striking a deal with the owner of said
10 tracks and then repair them?

11 Well, I hoped that I helped you and my
12 concerns to be heard tonight and thank you, and
13 then please, ST Board, before you pick up that
14 pen and put it to the paper, remember all these
15 hands up there asking for their voices to be
16 heard and at every STB meeting know those
17 farmers are asking for the same. Thank you.

18 MIRJAM MELIN: Good afternoon. My name
19 is Mirjam Melin. My concerns for you today
20 relate to the loss of local industry, farming,
21 and its production facilities, our farm fields.

22 If this rail were to be built, it would
23 be as successful as Mr. Patton proclaims it
24 could be, we are looking at industry springing

1 up along the rail, providing jobs and bringing
2 prosperity to our area. That sounds wonderful
3 at first glance but then let's look a little
4 closer.

5 Industry requiring rails are not small
6 industries. They would have to be big enough to
7 remain cost effective to build their own
8 connecting rail and planning are considerable
9 investments. Both the physical space for the
10 new industry and the necessary rail will require
11 more destruction of our farmland.

12 Industry need employees and employees
13 need housing, subdivisions and housing
14 developments need roads, all of this will
15 require more destruction of farmland. More
16 people means more services required, schools,
17 libraries, medical facilities, shops, all of
18 this will require getting more destruction of
19 our farmland.

20 Those of us in rural townships are not
21 opposed to growth and realize that growth is
22 necessary to be a vibrant community. We look
23 for growth in areas that will leave our
24 farmland, our production facilities, mostly

1 intact, doing what it does best, grow food.

2 The benefits that Mr. Patton speaks of
3 will be a continuous nibble at valuable
4 farmland, a nonrenewable resource. According to
5 the American Farmland Trust, 50 acres of farm
6 and ranch lands are developed every hour in the
7 US. Between 1982 and 2010 the US developed more
8 than 24 million acres of agricultural land, an
9 area the size of the states of Indiana and Rhode
10 Island combined.

11 Many rural townships had the foresight
12 to put zoning regulations in place to protect
13 against the kinds of development that's being
14 proposed, zoning that protects against the
15 destruction of a nonrenewable resource.

16 GLB is a private, for-profit company.
17 They are dependent on their investors and,
18 therefore, dependent on the financial market
19 fluctuations. The company has no proven track
20 record of any kind.

21 No Class 1 railroads have publicly
22 stated they will use the proposed rail line. In
23 other words, this project is highly speculative;
24 therefore, I respectfully request that the short

1 and long term as well as the cumulative effects
2 of the Great Lakes Basin project are analyzed
3 in-depth in the EIS in the following areas:

4 That destruction of prime farmland for
5 the GLB project as well as the potential
6 development of prime farmland along the rail
7 corridor, the permanent degradation of our human
8 environment, the socioeconomic impact on rural
9 communities and farmers, I request that during
10 this analysis you weigh out the permanent
11 destruction of nonrenewable resources against
12 the effects of getting mostly nonperishable
13 goods to market a little faster.

14 I also request that you consider the
15 considerable rural -- loss of rural communities
16 individuals might face if this highly
17 speculative project fails during or after
18 construction.

19 The National Environmental Policy Act
20 has asked all of us to preserve our environment
21 for future generations. Preservation of the
22 land that feeds us should be one of our primary
23 concerns. Thank you.

24 DAWN DITZENBERGER: Dawn Ditzenberger.

1 Last name D-I-T-Z-E-N-B-E-R-G-E-R. Good evening
2 and thank you for coming to hear our voices. I
3 speak tonight because my family will be directly
4 impacted by this.

5 They farmed four generations now. They
6 work very hard to take land, clear it, take out
7 fence rows, make it efficient and now this line
8 would cut their land and cut right across it and
9 take away those efficiencies, and we talk about
10 a world that population is growing and we ask
11 ourselves how are we going to feed this growing
12 population 20 and 50 years from now, yet we want
13 to come now and usurp good prime farmland that
14 can help feed a growing population. It makes no
15 sense to me. I do not see the value in it.

16 So one of my questions here is that
17 there is thousands of miles of train lines that
18 are already in existence. How are we utilizing
19 that? What capacity are those lines running at
20 today? Are they at 70 percent and more and we
21 need this or are they at 20 or 30 percent and I
22 think we need to look at being more efficient
23 and using what we already have as transportation
24 resources.

1 No. 2, they talk about how this train
2 line would reduce the amount of trucks on the
3 roads, and my initial thought was what's the
4 impact on the people who truck for a living for
5 all those small businesses, what happens to
6 them?

7 So they write that there are going to
8 be 5 to 600 permanent jobs developed along with
9 this train line but what's the net that we get?
10 Will it be positive or negative once you destroy
11 those trucking businesses because you brought
12 this new train line on and where are those jobs?
13 Will they be here in Rock County or are they
14 going to be down in Indiana or someplace else?
15 I really want to know what is the benefit to
16 this area.

17 I also have a question about location.
18 I found it very interesting when I reviewed the
19 maps that the train line veers west, goes around
20 the southern edge of DeKalb County, Illinois and
21 then goes north and then veers east again. Why
22 go around it? Wouldn't it make more sense to
23 have gone straight north rather than spending
24 all that money to go west and then east again?

1 Why was that avoided?

2 And then I am also curious once you
3 reach the state line, why did you veer west
4 again? You can still get the same three
5 interchanges if you went straight north along
6 the far western edge of Walworth County.

7 So I just don't understand why we are
8 not looking at some alternative routes if this
9 is really needed, but ultimately, I ask why do
10 you think we need it? There is a lot of unused
11 train lines. There are at least more than a
12 dozen train companies down in the Chicago area.
13 Why aren't they working together to find a way
14 to be more efficient and redo what they have
15 down there so they cannot take 30 hours but take
16 10 hours to move through that area? Why aren't
17 we looking at that? That's all I have. Thank
18 you.

19 JIM ZANTON: Good evening. I am Jim
20 Zanton. I am here as president of Rock Prairie
21 Grange. Last name is spelled Z-A-N-T-O-N. As
22 president of the Rock Prairie Grange, the grange
23 has been around since 1867. It's supported the
24 first railroad across the county. We were

1 instrumental in getting electricity through,
2 phone lines, gas lines to the country. All of
3 these things were necessities so we could farm
4 and live.

5 We supported the taking of land for
6 country roads, county roads, state highways, the
7 interstate road system, this was also a
8 necessity. We needed them to have a normal good
9 lifestyle but the Great Basin Transportation
10 railroad from Milton, Wisconsin to Indiana is
11 not a necessity. It's a private enterprise with
12 too many negatives for the common good.

13 If the current rail system doesn't want
14 it, why would the public, the farmers, the small
15 towns want this? They say it will create jobs,
16 10,000 to 12,000 over three states but these are
17 temporary jobs. Very few jobs will remain once
18 it is built. They also say it will take 1
19 million semis off the road. That will be a loss
20 of 1 million jobs permanently.

21 And also as sales director of the
22 Janesville Shorewest Realtors, our position is
23 to not lose anymore farmland than we already
24 have lost. Farmland is the most precious

1 commodity we have.

2 On the Rock Prairie, we have plano
3 soil, the best soil in the world and our Rock
4 Prairie is one of the two best areas in the
5 United States. If you don't have farmland but
6 live in rural homes, it dramatically reduces
7 their values also.

8 And lastly, safety. Safety is our
9 biggest issue nowadays. Safety for our
10 children, safety in the homes, safety for the
11 workplace, safety for seniors, safety for
12 baseball games. In the last ten years there has
13 been over a hundred derailments and if you don't
14 build it, there will be zero.

15 MIKE MULLIGAN: My name is Mike
16 Mulligan, M-U-L-L-I-G-A-N, and I mainly wanted
17 to address the Surface Transportation Board.
18 You people are involved with the railroads along
19 the Mississippi. They go through towns. Class
20 I railroads they got signs these trains travel
21 hundreds of trains a day on them three or four
22 tracks and through towns.

23 One of the things that we talked about
24 here is we have rails already from the spot in

1 the tracks at the end all the way down through
2 Wisconsin. They could utilize these even if it
3 means running through the City of Janesville,
4 running through the City of Beloit and if they
5 want to bypass Chicago, bypass it where that
6 Metra train line ends in Harvard to go around
7 rather than Milton, Wisconsin.

8 The big thing that I believe that they
9 are out here in prime farmland is because it's
10 easy to build and shape with. It's cost for
11 them. But if it you look at the Mississippi,
12 and we have Rock River here and Rock County rail
13 line already runs down it and if we are only
14 talking about one track in Wisconsin, they
15 already have one track. They already have a
16 rail line there.

17 And you are the Surface Transportation
18 Board, and in Wisconsin we have the Department
19 of Transportation and I just wanted to paint you
20 a little picture here.

21 Out here on the interstate when they
22 say we don't have enough capacity, they are
23 going to add a lane from the Illinois line up to
24 Madison, they are going to make it three lanes

1 in each direction, but they didn't build the
2 interstate two miles out into a farm field for
3 that extra land. Do you know what I mean? They
4 built it where the existing stuff was. They
5 didn't form a whole new road out in the middle
6 of a field. You got to use the rail system
7 that's already there.

8 We used to ship a lot of cars out of
9 Janesville with the GM plant which is no longer
10 there. All of the infrastructure is here if
11 they want to use it. You don't have to build
12 new. So all you got to do is use what's here
13 and if you are going to bypass the City of
14 Chicago, then bypass it in Harvard, Big Foot,
15 closer to Chicago, not in Milton, Wisconsin.
16 Thanks.

17 MARK MELIN: Good afternoon. My name
18 is Mark Melin. I am a landowner in Bradford
19 Township. Our mailing address is 8608 East Ryan
20 Drive.

21 Great Lake Basin is requesting
22 authority to construct and operate a rail line
23 in Indiana, Illinois and Wisconsin. From press
24 releases and GLB website, we know that GLB is

1 requesting a 200-foot wide easement which
2 includes a 50-foot utility easement.

3 My first request to you is to establish
4 whether or not the GLB is correct in including
5 this 50-foot wide utility easement in its
6 request for the STB for approval to construct
7 and operate a rail line.

8 GLB on their website under the heading
9 primary features under revenue it states, quote,
10 "As mentioned above, 15 feet of the 200-foot GLB
11 right-of-way would be reserved for possible use
12 by utilities as a new right-of-way to serve
13 potential future population growth of the
14 region. This is another potential source of
15 revenue for GLB," end quote.

16 No purpose or need for this 50-foot
17 utility easement is mentioned in the Notice of
18 Intent. As a matter of fact, this utility
19 easement is not mentioned at all and in the LOI.
20 If utility easement is not within the authority
21 of the Surface Transportation Board to approve
22 the 50-foot utility easement, it should be
23 immediately excluded.

24 Mr. Patton is on record stating that up

1 to six tracks are possible at some point in time
2 and that two tracks are capable of carrying 110
3 trains per day. Mr. Patton states he is
4 planning long term. He is planning for the
5 future of his grandchildren's grandchildren. If
6 Mr. Patton is looking that far in the future, we
7 should we should also in the Environmental
8 Impact Statement.

9 The EIS should provide analysis for
10 this project when -- at a full capacity. Six
11 tracks and 100 trains for every two tracks
12 impact at the current proposed single track in
13 Rock County is vastly different than the
14 potential six tracks. Six tracks will greatly
15 increase the impact of noise, sight and
16 vibration. It will greatly impact our natural
17 environment in all forms. It will make at-grade
18 crossings impossible and it will make the
19 likelihood of an accident that much greater.

20 The six tracks will completely alter
21 the rural nature of our township forever making
22 it less desirable to live in. Townships have
23 had the foresight to write zoning laws to keep
24 the townships rural because that is what the

1 people living here want. Six tracks would
2 destroy the human environment we have chosen
3 live in.

4 If the proposed track is indeed
5 supposed to take this into our grandchildren's
6 grandchildren's future, then the EIS should
7 include analysis of the need for this train
8 track in that future.

9 Mr. Patton is on record stating that
10 the rail would haul maybe ethanol, oil, coal and
11 grain. The EIS should analyze whether it is
12 realistic to think that from 100 years from now
13 we will still depend on fossil fuels.

14 I respectfully request that the EIS
15 analyze the GLB request as far into the future
16 as Mr. Patton does, including the possibility of
17 six rail tracks functioning at capacity. Thank
18 you.

19 VICKY DOUSS: My name is Vicky Duoss.
20 V-I-C-K-Y D-O-U-S-S, and I have a little bit
21 different take on this because I am speaking
22 personally as a member of the Emerald Grove
23 Congregational Church on Highway 14 in Bradford
24 Township.

1 According to GLB's map, this route will
2 be just to the west of the home next to the
3 church. Here are my concerns specific to our
4 church. We have 11 large stain glass windows
5 and I am worried about these fragile windows
6 holding up to pollution from diesel fuel and
7 dust and especially vibrations. Other church
8 property such as our crosses, our outdoor chimes
9 and the foundation of the old building will
10 deteriorate more quickly.

11 Our church is in a volunteer
12 fire/paramedic area like many persons here. So
13 if there is a derailment or some other toxic
14 spill, how will they deal with dangerous fires
15 induced with chemicals and who pays for their
16 training?

17 Our well water will be fouled. Our
18 small farm field behind the church will be
19 unrentable because its land is contaminated.
20 The rail is being built for 110 train capacity
21 traveling at 70 miles an hour and up to a mile
22 long. That's one every 15 minutes but even if
23 there is one an hour, when they pass that close
24 to the church, that noise will at least be

1 disruptive to our Christian education classes,
2 our choir practices and meetings but it may make
3 it nearly impossible to conduct a Sunday worship
4 service, a funeral or a wedding without
5 interruption.

6 My greatest concern, however, is water.
7 Again, looking at GLB's map. The railroad and
8 Highway 14 will intersect immediately west of
9 Emerald Grove. Most of those in the audience
10 who have traveled Highway 14 through Emerald
11 Grove know how often they have to watch for high
12 water signs. The water from a heavy storm or a
13 spring, snow thaw flows from the east through
14 Emerald Grove to the west immediately along the
15 edge of Highway 14, but this water crosses under
16 Highway 14 very close to where the railroad will
17 be crossing. How will all this water be
18 handled? If the water is impeded from flowing
19 to the west, it will back up into Emerald Grove.
20 Even worse, our church basement has already been
21 flooded.

22 I fear extensive and expensive damage
23 to our church, our parsonage and our septic
24 systems. There could also be erosion, pooling

1 and stagnant water problems with accompanying
2 bugs and odors. Additionally, the proposed
3 future growth and utilities mentioned in GLB's
4 material will surely exacerbate the previous
5 mentioned problems.

6 Members of our congregation are not
7 environmentalists and this is not their
8 full-time job. I find it sad that GLB has had
9 years with experts to study environmental issues
10 and yet at most we only have 90 days. Would
11 there be any possibility of a further extension?
12 Thank you.

13 BILL ROSSMILLER: Bill Rossmiller,
14 R-O-S-S-M-I-L-L-E-R. I am just a homeowner in a
15 middle of a bunch of farms. I chose to live
16 there, only lived there for ten years but my
17 concerns are with the amount of limestone that's
18 in the area, where is the water going to go when
19 they start putting up all these bridges?

20 When they have a rail bridge, bottom of
21 the road bridge has to be 25 feet above the top
22 of the track and in the case of Highway 140,
23 that means that from where they are going to put
24 it, they got to go up to about 30 feet in the

1 air for 140. Where is all the water going to go
2 that's going to be the runoff and this is going
3 to be blocked by this huge bridge and where is
4 it all going to go?

5 And my other concern is with the
6 environment is we got bats in the area. There
7 is white nose bats. We are wiping out bats like
8 crazy in this country. When the bats go, I am
9 afraid the bees will soon follow. I don't think
10 anybody can farm without bees. Thank you.

11 DAVID MOYER: My name is David Moyer,
12 M-O-Y-E-R. We live north of Clinton on 140 and
13 my family members, my inlaw members, are all
14 farmers in that area and three of the properties
15 are greatly affected by this proposed railroad.

16 Concerns, I have concerns, many
17 concerns. The need obviously there will be
18 addressed environmental issues for during
19 construction phases but that will more than
20 disrupt the agriculture after the construction
21 has happened.

22 We have great farm ground that is going
23 to be lost and I know it's been said many times
24 here but it is a commodity that does not grow

1 anymore. We only have so much. We have a lot
2 of it being taken away for projects. We cannot
3 afford to have more taken away because it is
4 taken away forever. The railroad will not be
5 there forever.

6 I have concerns during the construction
7 phases and afterwards about water issues. The
8 small tributaries that are in that area that
9 feed the little the streams that go to the
10 rivers. How are they being protected? Are they
11 going to be protected?

12 All of us that live in that area there
13 are in Rutland, the Township of Rutland, we have
14 railroad areas that cannot be used anymore
15 because railroads have come in, built their
16 railroads, had bridges and other items that are
17 now a deficit, a problem, and they are not
18 dealing with the issues. So how can we be
19 guaranteed that this is going to be -- these
20 lines are going to be maintained?

21 And Amy brought it up well, too, what
22 about the potential filing of bankruptcy and
23 clearing themselves or even worse, selling the
24 whole program to China, to overseas, to Japan,

1 to somewhere else. This is American farmland.
2 I have -- I know this is not an environmental
3 issue, but I have a very strong issue with the
4 fact that we are even considering taking
5 someone -- some people's land for one business'
6 private gain.

7 I know -- I am a business owner. I
8 know that my business just because I want that
9 corner lot on that one street because that's the
10 best thing for my operation doesn't mean I can
11 come and take eminent domain and take it over
12 because I want it for my profitable and you --
13 guess what, I don't care if you're profitable
14 about it, am I profitable in it?

15 All this affects the lands that the
16 farmers are taking, cutting off the parcel
17 lands, that's economic problems. That is
18 economic cost that they cannot regain.

19 Vibration and noise, a big issue. We
20 have rails now in our area that we can feel out
21 in the country when it goes through. These
22 other proposed are a lot closer than that,
23 within a half a mile and that would be a big
24 problem; and I think that's all I can say

1 because I am cut off on time. So thank you very
2 much.

3 STEPHEN VIVIAN: My name is Stephen
4 Vivian, V-I-V-I-A-N. I am from Janesville.
5 Now, one thing about the railroad to be built is
6 I really support the rail being built but they
7 should build it in former abandoned rails. This
8 is a sole line in Milwaukee. Whether they build
9 south -- they should build south closer to
10 Chicago rather than so far away so that the
11 Milton and from Chicago up to Fort Atkinson
12 really is not a good route.

13 So if they use the existing old
14 abandoned rails, that would be a hell of a lot
15 better than go build a brand new one. That's
16 all I got to say. Thank you.

17 LOIS BROEGE: Lois Broege, L-O-I-S, B
18 as in boy R-O-E-G-E. First of all, I want to
19 say that farms are an industry. This is not
20 located in an industrial park. They are a part
21 of the lay of the land and the life in it, in
22 the land.

23 Rock County is too populated, too
24 developed residentially and industrially and

1 environmentally cared for to jeopardize it with
2 a fast multi-train track that brings with it
3 emergencies and derailments.

4 Every day many commuters come into Rock
5 County for work, school, supplies, shopping,
6 entertainment, hospitals and senior centers are
7 there as well as the homes and businesses that
8 are clustered around lakes, rivers, creeks,
9 hillsides, and in wooded areas. I really
10 believe that it is too populated to have such an
11 enormous train track.

12 My concern is that Rock County this
13 would be too dangerous to the public and the
14 economy and it's not a safe distance from the
15 population resulting in daily hardships and
16 emergencies to people of all ages. It does not
17 financially support the needed emergencies of
18 the highways and roads and road surfaces.

19 It fails to compliment the existing lay
20 of the land and environment. Just like highways
21 and roads across the nation, railroads are
22 entities that need to coordinate and work for
23 public safety not affecting the current economy.
24 The environment should be preserved, the lay of

1 the land and be a compliment to the community.

2 WILLIAM BREITSPRECHER: Bill
3 Breitsprecher. You got the spelling. Great
4 Lakes Basin Transportation is a house of cards.
5 It's chief promoter has no experience in the
6 most complex transportation system in the world,
7 American railroads. While he does have somebody
8 involved that does have some rail background,
9 he's not involved with this. He has no
10 experience in this type of business model but
11 more importantly, Great Lakes Basin is abusing
12 the approval process. They have intentionally
13 put forward a shape shifting intellectually
14 dishonest railroad plan.

15 It is impossible to come here prepared
16 to tell you exactly why the railroad needs to be
17 immediately denied because they just change the
18 plan on the fly and it is just being made up as
19 it goes along. I'll come back to that later.

20 When they need to impress people that
21 there is a need for the railroad, yeah, then
22 they are going to claim we have 110 trains
23 bypass from Chicago. Now remember each train is
24 at least 100 cars. We are talking about

1 11,000 cars a day. That's more than the
2 Wisconsin and Southern carries for weeks and
3 weeks just to give you something to compare that
4 to. It isn't going to happen.

5 And that they will ship any freight
6 that way, they talked about online shippers,
7 they misrepresent, Great Lakes Transportation,
8 misrepresents -- they'll let individual farmers
9 put things in freight cars. Farmers haven't
10 individually shipped on a railroad since the
11 1800s. That just isn't going to happen. This
12 business plan isn't designed to come to succeed.
13 I will come more to that later.

14 But after two hearings last week, did
15 you catch in the news Great Lakes now admits
16 they have no investors. Well, a few weeks ago
17 they were saying they had \$8 billion lined up.
18 Which is it? This is a shifting house of cards.
19 They thought -- Last week they -- one of their
20 leaders came forward and said they will maybe
21 have 16 trains a day.

22 Now, here's the fact, whether they
23 build a double track, it doesn't matter if it's
24 single track in Wisconsin and becomes double

1 track later, the cost of building and supporting
2 the railroad is the same, whether there is one
3 train or a gazillion trains. They are not going
4 to have 110 trains a day. They are not going to
5 have 16 trains a day. There is no railroad that
6 is indicated they will use this, the short haul
7 themselves around Chicago and give away some of
8 the freight revenue. They cannot support the
9 capital structure and certainly will end up in
10 bankruptcy.

11 In fact, that's probably why they need
12 the extra 50 feet of the right-of-way because
13 when it goes to sale in bankruptcy after the
14 promoters have made fortunes and gotten out of
15 it and especially after the people who
16 constructed have made their money and gotten out
17 of it, the railroad will be left to support that
18 financial structure and it will be impossible.
19 I need to ask you to go back and research this.

20 The entire American railroad network
21 was essentially completed more than a hundred
22 years ago, and virtually every major line today
23 began as a financial I am going to use the scam.
24 Virtually every major railroad line, every

1 existing railroad line today, consists of
2 components that were built, were
3 overcapitalized.

4 The railroad never earned back its
5 capital, went to bankruptcy and eventually
6 another interest comes forward and takes it.
7 This is just a charade and the proposal is not
8 specific enough to even merit this hearing, much
9 let alone go forward with an environmental
10 statement. This is just a charade.

11 BRAD MAIR: My name is Brad Mair,
12 M-A-I-R. My comments are strictly related to
13 farmland preservation. The State of Wisconsin
14 has a Farmland Preservation Program. Farmers in
15 order to be part of that program have to have a
16 nutrient management plan, they have to do soil
17 sampling every four years, they have to utilize
18 appropriate tillage in order to reduce soil
19 erosion.

20 I live in Johnstown Township and it has
21 been stated earlier the townships have their own
22 zoning ordinances. If anybody wants to take
23 productive cropland out of production, they have
24 to get a variance on the zoning codes in our

1 township. Cities, towns and villages, townships
2 all have smart code initiatives. These three
3 methods aim to preserve productive cropland.
4 Farmland in eastern Rock County by many accounts
5 is some of the best in the county and maybe even
6 in the world.

7 The Surface Transportation Board should
8 consider this land a precious irreplaceable
9 natural resource. One might find that USDA is
10 responsible for a short video called Earth is an
11 Apple which takes approximately 1/32nd of the
12 Earth's surface is suitable for growing food and
13 we are losing on average an acre a minute to
14 development. But the proposed project will
15 eliminate approximately 570 acres in Rock County
16 alone. Please take time to review this video.

17 Also, GLBR's narrative on the rail
18 states, quote, "The all green field route passes
19 through farmland," unquote. As if to imply that
20 farmland is insignificant in the overall scope
21 of its project.

22 Previous generations of farmers used to
23 say that they don't make -- take care of what
24 you have -- take care of the land you have

1 because they don't make any more of it. Based
2 on the need to preserve this natural resource, I
3 have two requests.

4 First, a thorough analysis of the
5 freight throughput issues of the Chicago rail
6 hub. Average delays are 30 hours means some
7 cars get through quicker and some sit and take a
8 little longer. Why is that? 100 percent
9 efficiency should be achieved before this
10 project is approved.

11 Second, an alternative plan that would
12 upgrade existing rail lines, activate retired
13 lines and provide a route for this project that
14 has zero impact on farmland. Thank you. Thank
15 you.

16 DAVID BAER: Good evening everybody. I
17 am David Baer. I am from Clinton Township,
18 Lakeshore Road. I have several concerns. I
19 farm on a small scale personally. I move small
20 equipment along the roads I travel are county
21 roads or more township roads. A lot of these
22 roads are going to be closed.

23 According to the website, they are
24 talking about only keeping state highways and

1 some of the larger roads open. This is going to
2 affect my movement of equipment.

3 We also use Tiffany-Pelishek Nature
4 Trail. The Clinton track field uses it a lot.
5 A lot of horses frequently travel on that old
6 retired railway line over there and this is
7 going to actually cut right through there. It's
8 going to render that trail fairly useless. It's
9 actually one of the only public trails we have
10 in the area for quite a few miles so it's
11 definitely going to be a problem.

12 Our property value because of how close
13 we are to this train is going to drop, make no
14 mistake about it. Anytime you have a lot of
15 dead end roads, you have very little access to
16 town, your property values are going to drop
17 because people are not going to want to deal
18 with the lack of ability for your volunteer fire
19 department to get to your house in case your
20 house burns down or other issues of snowplowing.
21 The county roads are tough to keep open when
22 it's blizzarding out. It's going to be even
23 less so when we have a dead end road. It's not
24 as important as keeping some of the major

1 thoroughfares open.

2 School buses are a concern. That has
3 been brought up before. There is also the issue
4 of Turtle Creek. It's one of the most fragile
5 wetlands in this area. It's definitely going to
6 effect the runoff of -- and how that creek
7 navigates.

8 We also have issues -- I work for a
9 large farm farther south in Illinois also on
10 this line, we have drain tiles. This is going
11 to affect our drainage tiles that have been in
12 place for some 50, 80 years. It's going to
13 require a lot of expense. I don't see anywhere
14 on the website that they are going to pay for
15 the drain tiles to be repaired. And this the
16 sheer cost of this proposal looks like it could
17 bankrupt this company just by itself without
18 even any trains going on here, so these are just
19 my main concerns and, again, farmland, extremely
20 important.

21 That's many of our livelihoods whether
22 we farm personally or whether we work for
23 another farm, we just need to keep that in
24 perspective and, you know, this is why I oppose

1 this train and I want to strongly recommend that
2 the GLB look at the current rail lines because
3 we do need trains to get around Chicago, it's
4 important, I understand their situation but they
5 need to investigate into trucking, trucking
6 company where they can transfer from their own
7 loaded trains onto the trucks and use some of
8 the interstates to transfer this and keep people
9 working. This is going to put 1 million
10 truckers out of work. I don't see them going to
11 work for the railway anytime soon.

12 So I appreciate the Board coming here
13 and hearing all of our concerns and I appreciate
14 your time. So that's all I have.

15 BARBARA ANDREW: Hi. Barbara Andrew.
16 I am speaking as a member of the Emerald Grove
17 Cemetery Auxiliary. My last is name is Andrew,
18 A-N-D-R-E-W. The Emerald Grove Cemetery in
19 Bradford Township was established in 1850. The
20 proposal of GLB would take 100 feet of the
21 entire west end of the cemetery. The result
22 would leave only a 400-foot buffer between the
23 existing graves and the railroad right-of-way.

24 My concerns are vibration and

1 pollution. The cemetery has markers and
2 headstones that date back to the 1850s.
3 Vibrations, diesel emissions and dust pollution
4 will cause destruction and deterioration of
5 these historic irreplaceable pieces of our
6 history. Upkeep will require time and money.

7 Noise, it would be disturbing for a
8 grieving family to endure the noise of a 70-mile
9 per hour train passing in close proximity to
10 their loved ones final resting place.

11 Peacefulness and telempathy would be
12 non-existent. Erosion, when the natural grade
13 of the land is altered, surface runoff will
14 cause erosion and ponding in the cemetery.
15 Stagnant water could lead to issues with
16 mosquitos and odors making it an undesirable
17 setting for a burial.

18 Health and safety issues, if disease
19 carrying insects and not just weeds develop,
20 chemicals may be sprayed causing a health risk
21 to attendees of burials and to dozens of
22 children taking part in the Memorial Day Service
23 held annually to honor the 120 veterans who are
24 buried in our cemetery.

1 Any spill or derailment of hazardous
2 materials could endanger humans and/or animals,
3 cause groundwater contamination and overtax our
4 volunteer emergency services.

5 Economic impact, the west end of the
6 cemetery lies within the proposed easement.
7 Because of the negative effects, the building of
8 this railroad will severely restrict the ongoing
9 guardianship of this cemetery. There would be
10 little income from sales and perpetual care
11 would be impossible.

12 Please research the short- and
13 long-term effects of all the concerns listed.
14 If this proposal is approved, there will be far
15 reaching effects for future generations. Thank
16 you.

17 SCOTT JOHNSON: This is a very
18 emotional subject and many speakers tonight have
19 spoke from the heart with great passion and I
20 think with great sense of ownership and value to
21 the community. I think there is also a common
22 theme that's being showed as to why can't we
23 reuse the current right-of-ways or reactivate
24 the past right-of-ways? They don't require

1 perhaps as much upgrade and if all the
2 improvements that we are going to put into the
3 land where we crossed highways, why can't we do
4 that with the current right-of-ways?

5 I'm not -- I received a call this
6 afternoon from home. Home is Johnstown and
7 future centenarian is living there. She gave me
8 birth and it wasn't really a question of whether
9 or not I was going to be here, it was whether or
10 not I was going to get here in time; but I
11 questioned the value of the tracks and the
12 expense of the valuable land that hasn't yet
13 been ruined.

14 How many trucks are we going to take
15 off the freeway? How much does each train haul,
16 and politically we have set this in -- like
17 people we have elected over the years, we have
18 set this whole thing in action way before today,
19 but I think reusing the current railways is
20 probably the first choice.

21 Another choice I think might be a
22 little bit out there but cannot the Department
23 of Transportation figure out how to marry road
24 right-of-way and rail right-of-way and perhaps

1 place this high speed train down the center
2 median strip of our freeway where we already
3 have a roadway right-of-way there? It doesn't
4 turn left or right. You usually exit right or
5 left going one way or the other. There is a lot
6 of problems with that proposal. But it's a
7 right-of-way that already exists and if we are
8 going to take the trucks off the freeway and put
9 them on the train, why not run them down the
10 same path? We have already bought it. We
11 already cleared the buildings and the land.

12 For those of us who drive four
13 wheelers, we subsidize our current trucking
14 industry rather substantially whether we realize
15 it or not. It takes 2200 four wheelers to do
16 the amount of damage to the freeway that one
17 18-wheeler does in one pass.

18 If you look at your fuel debts, those
19 2200 miles pays \$45 in tax. The trucker is
20 paying more fees and other things but his fuel
21 tax is 10¢ for that same mile of damage. We are
22 subsidizing. Our infrastructure needs to be
23 repaired. We do need to upgrade our rails. I
24 just don't think we need to build new on new

1 land. We need to repurpose what we already
2 have.

3 KEVIN BOBOLZ: Kevin Bobolz,
4 B-O-B-O-L-Z. I guess when you're 25th or 30th
5 in line there is not a lot of new things I am
6 going to say. I actually wanted to thank Dave
7 for coming here because looking at their agenda,
8 a lot of public meetings with a lot of people
9 who have a lot of anger, myself included, I am
10 actually glad that you came out here to listen.

11 Some of our friends on the east coast,
12 food doesn't come from a grocery store. In
13 fact, most of the people, including my family,
14 are basically the ones who help all of us to eat
15 every day.

16 We are a fourth generation farm. I
17 happen to be in the path of this. And I look
18 at -- it's been mentioned up here Rock County
19 some of the finest -- some of the finest
20 property in the world, some of the most
21 productive property in the world that feeds all
22 of us. It more than pulls its weight. It is an
23 asset that is beyond compare and that's been
24 mentioned, it's one of those things that's not

1 being made anymore. Buy land my dad always says
2 because they are not making any more of it.

3 We have unique soil and water structure
4 here with water moving freely through limestone
5 basins that supplies us with incredible
6 conditions for growing crops.

7 One of the things that I have found out
8 from personal experience is that railroads often
9 don't make good neighbors especially when you
10 have animals, free ranging animals.

11 For us, five months or six out of the
12 year we are growing crops. For six months out
13 of the year, we have cattle ranging over our --
14 ranging over our property to eat during the
15 winter. It's not going to work real well with
16 110 trains running through there a day.

17 I was asked to address socioeconomic
18 concerns or environmental concerns and I guess
19 after 110 years, I am the environment. I am the
20 environment that this is going through.
21 Visually, sound, vibration, monetary loss, it
22 isn't just one and done. This is land that's
23 been providing you with food for a hundred years
24 and our family with income for a hundred years.

1 It's going to be a shame to lose it if it's lost
2 when other alternatives are not examined
3 thoroughly. I appreciate your time.

4 GARY TAGTMEIER: Hi. My name is Gary
5 Tagtmeier, one R in Gary, T-A-G-T-M-E-I-E-R. I
6 live on Stateline Road about 100 yards from
7 where the proposed rail line would cross the
8 road. I have three issues to comment on.

9 The first is the purpose of the
10 project. In STB notes, Great Lakes
11 Transportation states that the principal
12 purposes of the proposed rail line, as Dave
13 stated earlier, is to provide more efficient
14 options to route trains around the city and to
15 provide more capacity.

16 Now the same notice states that the --
17 Section 109.01 provides the Board must approved
18 a construction request unless it finds that the
19 construction is inconsistent with the public
20 convenience and necessity. Well, this new line
21 is certainly not consistent with public
22 convenience as I am sure you have heard and it
23 certainly is not a public necessity because not
24 many people are screaming about how necessary

1 this is. And the notice doesn't even say
2 anything about satisfying the public convenience
3 or public necessity.

4 So this project simply reduces the
5 railroad shipping time through Chicago which
6 means lower costs for them which will result in
7 lower costs for shippers.

8 The bottom line is the railroads, the
9 shippers and the new railroad line all make more
10 profit. This project is not for the public
11 convenience or public necessity. I ask the
12 Board to make special note of this.

13 Secondly, second issue is regarding the
14 efficiency of the rail line. Here's at least
15 one alternative to the proposed project. This
16 is the description of the CREATE organization's
17 purpose. CREATE is the first of its kind
18 partnership between US Department of
19 Transportation, State of Illinois, City of
20 Chicago, Metra, Amtrak and the nation's freight
21 railroads. As a project of national
22 significance, CREATE will invest billions in --
23 and create needed improvements to increase the
24 efficiency of the region's passenger and freight

1 infrastructure to enhance the quality of life
2 for Chicago area residents so satisfying, the
3 purpose of the proposed project is already being
4 dealt with by major government entities and
5 major railways. I request that the EIS work
6 with CREATE to solve this Chicago congestion
7 problem as an alternative to this rail line.

8 The third issue is that I'm asking for
9 two more items to be added to this list. No. 1,
10 I would like EIS to study the psychological
11 impact, the stress, the loss of sleep and
12 resulting effect on productivity from the
13 landowners whose farms will be cut into pieces
14 making it more difficult to farm, the owners who
15 will have the rail line within a hundred yards
16 of their home and the owners who will have land
17 that's been in their family for 50 years or more
18 taken away by eminent domain.

19 No. 2, I would also like the EIS to
20 research how many truck drivers will lose their
21 jobs as a result of lower freight costs and more
22 goods being shipped on this new rail and the
23 negative impact on the local economy from its
24 loss of jobs.

1 This psychological impact
2 inconveniences the farmers and rural residents,
3 the taking of land by eminent domain and loss of
4 jobs is all for the profit of railroads, the
5 shippers and the new rail line hub.

6 So based upon these and many other
7 issues, I respectfully request that the Board
8 deny this petition. Thank you for your time.

9 NICK VENABLE: Hello. My name is Nick
10 Venable, V-E-N-A-B-L-E. I am a fourth
11 generation crop farmer on the Rock Prairie. My
12 wife and I are hoping our sons and future
13 daughter will carry on our family's farming
14 tradition.

15 We recognize that as a committee you
16 have heard it all, the decreased land value,
17 noise, pollution, emergency vehicle response
18 time and et cetera. No one wants a railway
19 through their property. Today, I want you to
20 remember three key words, plano silt loam. This
21 is what makes the land in our opposition
22 different, unique and extremely rare. I
23 challenge you to thoroughly research and
24 consider the soil on the Rock Prairie. How will

1 losing this ground negatively impact the
2 agriculture economy of Wisconsin?

3 Fred Madison is a UW Madison professor
4 in the Department of Soil and Science, has this
5 to say about Rock Prairie ground, "The challenge
6 is to recognize the prairie as precious and
7 irreplaceable natural resource," end quote.

8 Wherever this rail eventually lies,
9 people will lose property value, have noise
10 concerns and pollution issues, but it doesn't
11 have to currently run through greater land that
12 can never be regained. I leave you with this
13 quote again from Fred Madison. "Those are
14 decisions we make. Once they are gone, you
15 don't bring them back. It's irreplaceable.
16 With all of my years in being in soil and
17 science, I can't tell you how to recreate them.
18 Even though it may not be something that looks
19 the biggest dollar winner, you have to look at
20 the long-term potential that soils have." Thank
21 you.

22 JOHN RINDFLEISCH: Good evening. My
23 name is John, J-O-H-N, Rindfleisch,
24 R-I-N-D-F-L-E-I-S-C-H, fire chief in the Clinton

1 Fire Protection District. I am here tonight
2 representing the Fire Protection District.

3 Dear Surface Transportation Board, at
4 the April meeting of the Clinton Fire Protection
5 District Board of Trustees, they voted to
6 support the opposition to the new rail based on
7 the safety of their firefighters, EMTs,
8 residents and the visitors to the district.

9 Clinton Fire Protection District is
10 primarily a volunteer, paid per call fire
11 department. Our areas are comprised by the
12 towns of Bradford and Clinton along with the
13 Village of Clinton and all 72 square miles. The
14 proposed rail dissects the fire district from
15 the southeast corner all the way to the
16 northwest corner. Access to emergencies on all
17 railroads is extremely limited if not impossible
18 based on policing them as far away from
19 populated areas and roadways.

20 Located along the proposed construction
21 are nine at-grade crossings, two private farm
22 crossings and four overpasses. Here a
23 congregating part of the Great Lake Basin
24 documents concern the district in regards to the

1 proposed crossings, one that I can list all
2 crossings in our area and one states it's safer
3 to eliminate crossings or minimize at-grade
4 crossings. Eliminating crossings would severely
5 limit our access and response times.

6 Nationwide fire and rescue departments
7 are experiencing a decline in the available
8 firefighters, EMTs especially during the
9 daytime. The departments are recording that
10 they are understaffed, underequipped, and
11 undertrained to handle the possible disaster
12 that a railroad can bring. Our department is
13 experiencing the same difficulties at this time.

14 Railroads are not new to this area, and
15 we currently have two that run through the
16 district. There about four trains per day on
17 these railroads, with some higher traffic at
18 certain times of the year but nothing like we
19 have seen in the publications that Great Lake
20 Basin has on their website.

21 We have had incidents along the current
22 lines. These incidents including traffic
23 accidents, derailments, grass and wildlife
24 fires. Just one derailment with hazardous

1 materials could devastate a community, placing
2 emergency responders and residents in a life or
3 death situation. In any emergency response,
4 times are critical, if not the meaning of life
5 or death.

6 In a cardiac arrest event, a patient
7 needs quick response from all levels of
8 emergency care if they have any chance of
9 survival.

10 Recent advancement in our area have
11 brought the survival rate from cardiac patients
12 walking out of a hospital up to 40 percent.
13 Much of this is due to quick response from local
14 EMS. The survivable outcome for any medical
15 emergency reflects on quick response time.

16 In the event there were a fire,
17 statistics show a fire will double every
18 30 seconds. With 95 percent of our area rural,
19 we are hauling water with tender trucks and
20 filling from water sources many miles from the
21 fire. When figuring how much water is needed to
22 fight these fires, turnaround time is critical,
23 but we have to drive up to 10 miles one way, any
24 delay could be costly or worse, fatal.

1 Our response time that it has taken us
2 in the Clinton Fire Protection District are some
3 of the best in the nation. In 2014 our
4 department received an ISO, Insurance Service
5 Organization, rating equal to some full-time
6 departments across the country. This rating has
7 placed our department in the top 3,000 out of
8 49,000 departments across the US. The ISO
9 rating is based on many factors but response
10 times are on the list and delays at crossings or
11 having to use alternate routes could change
12 that.

13 In concluding, our safety concerns are
14 based on the following: Safety at crossings,
15 response delays, Clinton Fire Protection
16 District along with our mutual departments are
17 understaffed, underequipped and undertrained for
18 a major rail disaster. Thank you for listening.

19 DANIELE MILLER: Hi. My name is
20 Daniele Miller. Thank you for coming and thank
21 you for listening. I'm the first person up here
22 with no notes because I was completely
23 undecided.

24 Everyone here has made great points

1 tonight. I am sure you have heard it at all
2 scoping meetings you have had so far. What I'm
3 about to tell you is nothing unusual but just a
4 quick little story. My husband and I decided to
5 move to Clinton, Wisconsin. We bought a small
6 three-acre parcel so we could raise our little
7 boys. I was also told not to get emotional but
8 I am not going to promise you I won't because
9 right now this proposed rail is about 50 feet
10 from our driveway. We have two little boys.

11 I also have compassion for our
12 neighbors and the farmland that it will also
13 consume and my neighbors probably still roll
14 their eyes at me that I call calves baby cows,
15 but that being said, I know that they raise all
16 the crops to feed their cows which is a dairy
17 farm. I don't know factually if this train
18 going through could change milk production, that
19 sort of thing. I am no expert, obviously I call
20 them baby cows.

21 That being said, this is a dream my
22 husband and I had and it feels like that's being
23 ruined and in our township, if we were to decide
24 to move, you have to have 35 acres. Well, we

1 only have three, so the cost to look at
2 potentially moving away from the train to
3 continue to raise our family in the peace and
4 quiet, have campfires with our friends, we even
5 do things like redneck things like shotgun
6 bowling, you know, that type of thing, it takes
7 out the peace and serenity from the life that we
8 wanted to live and we would never have the money
9 to buy 35 acres to rebuild what we have been
10 working on for the last ten years.

11 So that being said, thank you very
12 much. I appreciate your time.

13 BRANDEN FURSETH: Good evening. My
14 name is Branden Furseth, B-R-A-N-D-E-N
15 F-U-R-S-E-T-H. I am an agronomist and research
16 scientist here in Rock County, and my family
17 farms in Dane County. I generally am an
18 agricultural enthusiast so that's the
19 prospective I take here.

20 According to the USDA census of
21 agriculture, the US loses 1.5 million acres of
22 farmland each other to urban sprawl. That's
23 just under three acres per minute. This is a
24 very precarious trend considering the current

1 rise in population and the land that would be
2 used by this proposed project may seem like just
3 a drop in the bucket but we cannot take that for
4 granted.

5 Good agricultural soils take thousands
6 of years to develop so any damage of that soil
7 is permanent. The Rock Prairie soils here, for
8 example, were nurtured under the Tall Grass
9 Prairies for 10,000 years to get to their
10 current state. And any disruption of that will
11 not just be of the soil underneath the proposed
12 line but beyond it as well.

13 As others have mentioned, the rail
14 would manipulate the landscape, affect drainage,
15 erosion, the cropping practices on the land
16 around the railroad. Yes. There are existing
17 roads, rails and businesses and houses and towns
18 that have already displaced what could otherwise
19 be farmland all in the name of economic growth.

20 Some of the infrastructure is already
21 outdated and underutilized so as others have
22 mentioned, I think the Board should evaluate
23 those options of what we already have. If the
24 project moves forward, what will be done to

1 ensure that the rail is not outdated 20 or
2 30 years from now?

3 The GLB cites congestion through
4 Chicago. I don't think we are seeing a lot of
5 congestion in this area. From what I see, the
6 rail lines see very little use so I think maybe
7 if we improve the current lines, that would be a
8 good alternative.

9 This country thrives on economic growth
10 and I think that we all agree that positive
11 economic growth is a good thing, but economic
12 growth -- but the foundation of economic growth
13 is a solid agricultural system. Projects like
14 this cannot lose sight of the opportunity, costs
15 involved. The GLB rail is just another example
16 of the slow erosion of the agriculture economy
17 and the threats that it faces. Another drop in
18 the bucket that could be sacrificed.

19 Thomas Jefferson famously said,
20 "Agriculture is our wisest pursuit because it
21 will in the end contribute to the most real
22 wealth, good morals and happiness." He was
23 basically saying that without a strong
24 agriculture sector, nothing else can thrive.

1 Thank you.

2 AARON BENNETT: My name is Aaron
3 Bennett, B-E-N-N-E-T-T. I have come here to
4 talk about safety and the human environmental
5 impact that it will have. I have come here not
6 as a landowner which will have a railroad within
7 feet of my property but more as a neighbor.

8 In DC you have your neighborhoods, your
9 neighbor is next to you 10 feet away, 20 feet
10 away. My neighborhood is about five square
11 miles. My neighbors are all connected with the
12 county roads and believe it or not, I see my
13 neighbors probably more than you see your
14 neighbors in DC so with the road closures that
15 are about to happen, I won't see my neighbors
16 anymore. In fact, it will be much harder to get
17 to them if they need help.

18 See, out in DC, you have the police
19 constantly in your neighborhoods. Out by us we
20 may see a Rock County Sheriff once every other
21 week so we watch out for each other. That won't
22 happen anymore. At this point, we are on our
23 own.

24 I also come here as a teacher. I am a

1 coach. I do a lot of extracurricular activities
2 and we are in a rural, rural township. So I
3 expect my students to go home, do their chores.
4 They are out in the country, not just in the
5 Town of Clinton but outside. Now they have to
6 come back 6:00 o'clock, 7:00 o'clock at night
7 and the roads that they are used to traveling,
8 our young drivers that are 16, 17, 18 years old,
9 they now have to come back to our school
10 district are now taking different ways, clogging
11 up roads that they are not used to clogging up
12 because their roads are shut down as well.

13 So what I am asking you is how can you
14 do a type of study to effect this human
15 environmental impact? And when I let them go at
16 10:00 o'clock, 9:30 when they get done with
17 their basketball at 11:00 o'clock at night
18 because it went to overtime and they are driving
19 home, happy, excited, and there is a train 70
20 miles an hour going through that's not going to
21 honk its horn because they are looking out for
22 us obviously, are they going to be able to stop?
23 I am just curious.

24 JACOB FORD: Hello. I am Jacob Ford,

1 J-A-C-O-B F-O-R-D, and I live just outside of
2 Johnstown in between Janesville and like
3 Edgerton, and I am 22 years old. Tomorrow is
4 going to be my 23rd birthday and I am happy to
5 sort of kind of represent the younger generation
6 who are going to hopefully not experience this
7 railway. I am a little disorganized as the
8 younger generation usually are, but the railway
9 will create jobs for the people who do create it
10 but how many will it take away?

11 Like you have heard so many people talk
12 about how many acres of land that they are going
13 to lose, and that's just not right, for food
14 production. You got to eat somehow, and I
15 already see people with like Century 21 signs in
16 their yards. Like they are going to move away
17 because of this and that's just not great. I
18 don't agree with that.

19 The Rock Prairie farmland is some of
20 the best farmland in the world and there are two
21 articles in Janesville Gazette by Marcia
22 Neleson, M-A-R-C-I-A N-E-L-E-S-O-N and those
23 articles are from six years ago telling about
24 how great the land in Rock Prairie is and like

1 those quotes that Mr. Brandl said from -- I
2 forget the man's name but those two articles are
3 really great information about it and goes into
4 great detail about how great the land is in Rock
5 Prairie and also what we need to do to preserve
6 that so it doesn't get lost to industrial means
7 or any kind of thing like that. Yeah.

8 And one question I do have is why
9 didn't me and my family find out about this
10 earlier because we went to vote on April 4th and
11 due to the kind lady right here, she told us
12 about this and it was completely out of left
13 field. Like we never even heard about this
14 before and I wish we would have known sooner
15 because this railway will be about half a mile
16 from my mother's backyard and it will be a
17 definite hindrance to living our life.

18 All the wildlife that will be disrupted
19 by the noise, vibration and smoke and all that
20 and just the other day a bald eagle or something
21 to the likes of that was spotted by my mother
22 around County A next to Johnstown, so if we are
23 having wildlife like that, I think we should
24 take better means of protecting it.

1 I would just keep the railway in
2 Chicago because that's where they have big
3 industrial things and, what is the word,
4 metropolitan type stuff. I would just keep it
5 there rather than bring it way out here. Thank
6 you.

7 MARGARET WAITE: Hi. I am Margaret
8 Waite, W-A-I-T-E, and I want to thank the Board
9 for listening to some of the same comments that
10 have been heard, but I did want to register my
11 opposition to the GLB railway.

12 The line drawn on the map to start this
13 process to gain your approval currently divides
14 my property into unusable pieces. The noise,
15 the vibration and drainage will force me to
16 rebuild my livestock facilities.

17 A derailment will contaminate my water
18 supply. Increased air pollution will impact my
19 asthma. The roads will become a dead end and my
20 township will have to maintain more railroad
21 crossings and efficient railways on an increased
22 tax base. The safety of my friends and family
23 is at risk crossing the high speed rail, school
24 buses and farm equipment.

1 First responders will need more time
2 for emergencies and our volunteer departments
3 don't have the resources for a hazardous waste
4 removal if there is a derailment which has
5 already been said before but even if the line
6 changes or it never comes to Wisconsin, I would
7 still register opposition to any project like
8 the GLB that can arrogantly draw a line on the
9 map without proving need for it and complete
10 disregard of the people who have chosen with
11 pride to be farmers and stewards of our land
12 with people who have chosen to live in rural
13 America surrounded by our natural resources.

14 GLB's materialistic, juvenile, selfish
15 approach to use Wisconsin as a thoroughfare for
16 private gain and our state government has done
17 to develop economically and environmentally
18 responsible smart growth plans to meet the needs
19 of all Wisconsin residents now and in the
20 future, it disregards the Farmland Preservation
21 Programs and the sustainable ag practices that
22 we have incorporated to save our farmland.

23 Please allow us to continue to improve
24 our existing infrastructures to meet the needs

1 of people in our local smart growth plans and
2 deny the GLB which will disrupt our agriculture
3 way of life. Thank you.

4 DANA BRANDL: My name is Dana Brandl.
5 D-A-N-A B-R-A-N-D-L. I'm just going to kind of
6 touch on the local economic concerns that I
7 have. An article published from the -- or the
8 Pennsylvania State University discusses the
9 noise or unwanted sounds and vibration issues to
10 domestic animals and wildlife. Issues are
11 changes to their auditory system specifically,
12 masking or interfering with normal animal
13 functions which leads to stress, hypertension,
14 behavioral changes and interfering with their
15 reproductive systems.

16 Along this proposed route just east of
17 Clinton is the Brandl dairy farm. Not only
18 taking a significant amount of acreage from the
19 farm, but also this proximity of the track to
20 the dairy facilities could drastically effect
21 the dairy production due to the sound, if not
22 render the farm inoperable. So what does it
23 impact after showing this is a dairy farm?

24 First of all, the Brandl Farm employs

1 four full-time employees as well as multiple
2 part-time employees, which doesn't sound like
3 much in the grand scheme of things. They also
4 contribute over a million dollars into the
5 economy per year. The third thing, 21,000
6 pounds of milk are shipped from this farm per
7 day which is 2400 gallons per day.

8 According to the USDA, in 2010, the
9 average American over the age of 20 consumed six
10 fluid ounces of milk per day. That means
11 that the Brandl farm ships enough milk for over
12 50,000 Americans per day. In addition to the
13 milk leaving the Brandl farm, 64,000 pounds of
14 beef per year leave the Brandl farm.

15 According to the USDA, also in 2010,
16 the average American had consumed 64 and a half
17 pounds of beef per year so that's just enough
18 beef for just under 1,000 Americans per year,
19 and this is just one farm along that proposed
20 route and that's a significant amount of food
21 from the food supply, so it may seem like a
22 small area taken out of production, it would
23 significantly impact our economy and our food
24 supply. So thank you for your time and for

1 listening.

2 PATRICK MULLOOLY: Patrick Mullooly,
3 M-U-L-L-O-O-L-Y. I am a Rock County landowner,
4 farmer and crop consultant. I have the
5 privilege of working with many of the
6 landowners, farmers along the proposed route
7 from the state line to Milton, and I am very
8 concerned about the disturbance of the land that
9 this project brings and it would not only affect
10 the land that they take from us but will affect
11 many acres of lands on either side of the rail
12 as 80 percent of this land or more along the
13 proposed route has surface and subsurface
14 drainage that will be disturbed and never be the
15 same, as our landowners, farmers and local,
16 state and federal governments have spent
17 hundreds of thousands of dollars in perfecting
18 drainage systems for many years to make our land
19 productive.

20 Many of these farms along this route
21 have been placed in the Farmland Preservation
22 Program for the State of Wisconsin. Also, many
23 have implemented programs through the Natural
24 Resources Conservation Service, such as,

1 Environmental Quality Assurance Programs and
2 Conservation Security Programs. That all
3 focused on preserving our productive soils.

4 So to say that this land that will be
5 taken is undeveloped is far from true. This
6 land has been developed by its owner to make
7 crucial assets to their businesses. The
8 proposed route will also be land that will be
9 land locked by rail systems which will make
10 access from farm equipment or any equipment for
11 that matter very difficult and unsafe. This
12 route would also disrupt rights-of-way of the
13 DNR natural gas pipelines.

14 As you look at our landscape today, we
15 have two railroad bridges in Bradford Township
16 that have been closed off due to lack of repair
17 over the last few years. I'm concerned for our
18 next generation as to how many rail lines and
19 rail structures they will see abandoned if we
20 drop the old and build new taking more acres of
21 farmland out of production.

22 We would request that you look into the
23 underusage of the existing rail lines today. We
24 would strongly request that you consider looking

1 into every available option of improving our
2 existing rail lines and making those a safer,
3 efficient and more cost effective option of
4 operation.

5 Before you would allow any rail line to
6 be built across some of the most productive
7 farmland in Wisconsin, the fact of taking this
8 amount of land out of production would cause
9 many environmental issues. Thank you for your
10 time.

11 TIM POGORELSKI: My name is Tim
12 Pogorelski, P-O-G-O-R-E-L-S-K-I. I'm the owner
13 of Boxcars Pub & Grub and president of the
14 Clinton Chamber of Commerce. First of all, my
15 sympathy to all the farm and landowners
16 throughout Rock County and Illinois along the
17 proposed railway, but I am here to speak about
18 another group of people that I believe this
19 railway would greatly affect and that's the
20 small business owners and merchants not only in
21 downtown Clinton but in the businesses outside
22 of downtown.

23 The conversations I have had with my
24 patrons is what let me to want to speak tonight

1 and offer the perspective there of someone
2 outside of a farm or landowner that will be
3 affected in a negative way. How will I be
4 affected you may wonder?

5 Well, first, the farmer or landowner
6 will have his income affected by the loss of
7 revenue due to the less land that he is able to
8 farm will greatly affect his disposable income.
9 This might lead to not being able to arrange for
10 a night out, take the family out for dinner, go
11 bowling, go into town for ice cream, whatever it
12 may be.

13 Another just as important factor is the
14 roads leading to the town will be affected. You
15 guys all know that people don't like to wait to
16 get somewhere but they want to get the quickest
17 way possible since they can't drive through the
18 neighbor's field and the road they used to take
19 is now closed, will have to travel an extra ten
20 miles or more to get to the businesses and
21 Clinton will be greatly affected.

22 As long as they have to travel down X,
23 Y or Z, they might as well just go to Walworth
24 or Sharon or Delavan and do their business there

1 if it's easier to get to.

2 My personal business depends a lot on
3 motorcycles in the summer and snowmobiles in the
4 winter and while it's tough enough to battle
5 mother nature, now we have to battle another
6 obstacle that is out of our control. People I
7 spoke to just yesterday they asked about Rock
8 Against the Rail and upon hearing about it, they
9 stated that they travel some of the roads that
10 will be affected and yes, how they will still
11 every once in a while make the trip via another
12 route, it would be -- it would affect how often
13 they would come in our direction.

14 I also believe that it will affect our
15 other unique businesses. They could be affected
16 by the fact that some of these people traveling
17 quickly and grabbing something to make a home
18 repair, an automotive repair, just to fill their
19 gas cans to mow their lawn or grab a gallon of
20 milk will now travel to another place as a
21 quicker destination and don't we all know how we
22 want to get from Point A to Point B quicker.

23 I know I may be talking about a small
24 percentage of lost revenue but I know that

1 myself and I am guessing other business owners
2 didn't get in the business to lose money. A 5
3 percent loss is still a 5 percent loss. Now
4 over the time one owns its business, it does add
5 up. Profits lost also greatly affects the value
6 of our businesses.

7 For myself personally my business is my
8 only source of income. It's my only source of
9 income and also an investment towards my
10 retirement some day. Just as these farmers who
11 inherited or purchased their land from their
12 fathers or grandfathers and hope to be able to
13 do so, are the same things with their kids or
14 grandkids would mean us having to work longer.
15 Just like I can accept having to work longer and
16 harder due to my own failures, bad decisions or
17 lack of effort but to have to work harder,
18 longer so someone else can salvage to gain I
19 find unacceptable. Thank you for your time and
20 consideration.

21 DAVE BRANDL: Boy, what will I talk
22 about after all that? Dave Brandl, B-R-A-N-D-L.
23 In Rock County we are going to lose 575 acres of
24 land if the railroad goes through. At 200

1 bushel an acre corn at \$3.50 that's \$400,000
2 Rock County would lose. If it's \$5, that's
3 \$575,000 of income the County will lose.

4 In Clinton Township, it will be
5 approximately seven miles of rail. So that
6 equals out to 168 acres of land that will be
7 taken out. So at 3.50 that's \$117,000, 600 lost
8 from our economy. At \$5, that's \$168,000 lost
9 that we can never get back once the rail is
10 built. That land is gone forever.

11 So that's a lot of money that would be
12 lost from our economy that's for our schools and
13 roads, whatever we want to have. I have a dairy
14 farm. Last year -- and we run 400 acres. Last
15 year our gross sales was 1.2 million. So this
16 400 acres supports the animals that produce this
17 1.4 or \$1.2 million. If you divide that
18 400 acres into 1.2 million you get \$3,000 an
19 acre of income that this land supplies, that if
20 the rail went through, you can take anywhere
21 from 15 to 18 acres out of our farm. At \$3,000
22 an acre, that's \$45,000 or \$54,000 of lost
23 income that we can't get back for our farm.

24 So them are just some numbers I hope

1 you take into consideration. The land does
2 produce a lot of cash for us, for our
3 communities to keep them going, keep our schools
4 running. Thank you very much.

5 MARY GILBANK PETERSON: Thank you. My
6 name is Mary Gilbank Peterson, G-I-L-B-A-N-K,
7 Peterson with an O. I'm also a landowner in
8 Clinton Township and also I am a realtor. I
9 work for Shorewest Realtors. I sell real estate
10 full time and for the last 10 years. I sell
11 approximately 100 properties a year for the last
12 few years and these properties include
13 residential, vacant land, commercial and farms.

14 I know firsthand property values are
15 less when easements are involved and properties
16 are close to and next to railways, busy
17 railways. I know the value of these properties
18 will go down substantially and the \$20,000 an
19 acre is not even a drop in the bucket for what
20 the values of our homes will depreciate and
21 could possibly sell for and the land that you
22 take out of production, the loss of income for
23 forever and then how that nonusable pieces of
24 property are unusable because of how the GLB's

1 easement will cut through it. The land has no
2 value, and we are not getting compensated for
3 that.

4 And what about the people's homes that
5 do not receive compensation but the values of
6 their homes decrease because of how close the
7 proposed railway would be, the Daniele Millers
8 of our community. First, we think our homes are
9 one of the biggest investments that we make and
10 the GLB will take some of that value away from
11 us.

12 Values of our properties go down, the
13 assessment for real estate taxes will also
14 decrease. Economically what will that do to our
15 Township and County revenue, the revenue that
16 goes to our schools, to maintain our roads and
17 more?

18 Looking at the proposed plan by Great
19 Lakes Basin rail, the train is within 700 feet
20 of my home to the east of it. As it speeds
21 along maybe up to 70 miles an hour, it will
22 cross over east Bradford, Clinton Townline Road
23 approximately 700 feet in front of my home with
24 the whistle blowing as it crosses the road so I

1 ask what will the decibel levels be?

2 Will you research the effects of noise,
3 the loudest of the whistles, the number of train
4 cars and find out if the constant noise of the
5 train every 13 minutes, and that comes from the
6 website, crossing with horns blowing to alert
7 traffic 24/7, not to mention the noise will be
8 twice as long as it travels to the side and to
9 the front of my home.

10 Our hearing, the hearing of my children
11 and the animals we raise, how will that noise
12 affect them? I work out of my home. I can't
13 imagine not having my doors and windows open.
14 Will it be so loud that I cannot speak on the
15 phone? Will the noise keep us up at night?
16 What about the rights for quiet enjoyment of our
17 property?

18 As a realtor, my job is selling real
19 estate but what I do is solve problems. I am a
20 problem solver, and I cannot understand why the
21 train problem in Chicago can't be solved by
22 existing train routes. I can't understand how
23 the answer to their problems is building brand
24 new.

1 Eminent domain is really -- is this
2 really for the betterment of the public or is
3 this private company Great Lakes Basin
4 Transportation for personal and financial gain?
5 Why reinvent the wheel? Is this something that
6 the Transportation Board can figure other
7 solutions? They are proposing flyovers of our
8 interstates and our highways here in Rock
9 County. Couldn't that be implemented in Chicago
10 at the present location? What about the job
11 loss and the negative economic impact it will
12 have in the current Chicago rail area if this
13 rail -- if this new rail is approved?

14 To think that corporate America can
15 have the opportunity to take away what I have
16 worked a lifetime to build, this project will
17 affect me, my neighbors, my community
18 financially, economically and environmentally
19 not to mention our health and safety.

20 Thank you for extending the comment
21 period deadlines and there is much to learn and
22 share. Thank you.

23 CLAIRE ESSELMAN: Hi. Our names are
24 Claire Esselman. C-L-A-I-R-E E-S-S-E-L-M-A-N.

1 MARIN FIRN: My name is Marin Firn,
2 M-A-R-I-N F-I-R-N.

3 NELEAH BOBOLZ: My name is Neleah
4 Bobolz, N-E-L-E-A-H B-O-B-O-L-Z.

5 CLAIREES SELMAN: I am going to show
6 how it impacts our environment. One of these
7 things are the diesel trains are now being put
8 in pollute the air and release carbon dioxide
9 which harms many people. Like if we had a
10 derailment, it's going right over the Turtle
11 Creek many know and if we had a derailment how
12 would we fix that? That's a lot of the problems
13 we are now facing with the new rail coming in
14 and it's just going to impact our fields,
15 cutting across all of our fields. We are not
16 going to be able to rototill, plant and harvest
17 all of our fields as the way we did before.

18 MARIN FIRN: And another thing it will
19 impact is our sleep. I mean, one train every
20 13 minutes going by 70 miles an hour, how are we
21 going to sleep at night and that could also
22 affect our school testing grades and it could
23 decrease by a lot and --

24 NELEAH BOBOLZ: Another impact is our

1 animals. I am a fifth generation farmer on my
2 family farm. I own my own beef cattle. I need
3 our pasture for pasture for my cows and my
4 calves to live, grow and thrive and if this
5 train comes through, I will be losing that
6 valuable farmland. Please don't let this
7 happen. Please hear us and give us a chance to
8 farm. Thank you for listening.

9 KIRK LEACH: Good evening. My name is
10 Kirk Leach, K-I-R-K L-E-A-C-H. I live in
11 LaPrairie Township but farm land in Bradford
12 Township. A lot of good points have been made
13 tonight and we are maybe starting to repeat
14 ourselves but I hope the Board is finding these
15 comments insightful and thoughtful. It kind of
16 those shows the level of commitment we have
17 about the situation.

18 One impact category that I think I'd
19 like the Board to take particular attention to
20 is the socioeconomic and I would say cultural
21 aspect impact of this. The majority of the
22 farms, the vast majority of the farms that would
23 be affected by this planned railroad are family
24 run farms, either single proprietorship or

1 incorporated but make no mistake, those
2 incorporated farms are still owned and run by
3 families.

4 Now numbers that can be verified by the
5 NASS, National Agricultural Statistics Service,
6 shows that the fastest disappearing category in
7 agriculture is that middle size family farm.
8 That makes that a valuable resource. We have
9 had eloquent conversations about how valuable
10 the land is, but I submit to you something that
11 is just as valuable is that culture, that class
12 of farmer, that's the person that owns the land,
13 that has been owning that land for generations
14 has the most commitment to farming that land
15 environmentally sustainable and sensitive and I
16 think that when the Board looks at anything that
17 could be a detriment to family farms, they have
18 to realize what a rare disappearing resource
19 that is. Thank you.

20 ARCH MORTON: Hi. My name is Arch
21 Morton, Jr., A-R-C-H M-O-R-T-O-N. I have an
22 official statement from the Rock County Farm
23 Bureau. The Rock County Farm Bureau opposes the
24 construction of a new rail line through Rock

1 County by the Great Lakes Basin Transportation,
2 Incorporated. We reached this position due to
3 the following concerns:

4 The loss of approximately 600 acres of
5 prime farmland within the County. The
6 burdensome impact farmers would face having the
7 railroad go through their farms. Not only would
8 farmers realize the loss of valuable farmland,
9 but they would also experience extra travel time
10 with farm machinery on roadways due to the rail
11 line splitting up fields.

12 An increased travel time leads to
13 additional traffic safety concerns and potential
14 for further restrictions on accesses to fields
15 and roadways. At our core is a very strong
16 belief about personal property rights. This
17 embodies our opposition in allowing a private
18 entity being able to use eminent domain to take
19 another person's private property for their own
20 personal financial gain.

21 Lastly, if only 20 percent or so of
22 existing railroad traffic were used in the
23 proposed line, we do not believe the rail line
24 is necessary.

1 I also have a few comments of my own as
2 a neighbor and a farmer. I farm in the eastern
3 part of the town of Prairie and also in the
4 southeastern part of the town of Harmony. Now
5 the proposed route does not go through my land.
6 It comes within one and quarter mile of my land,
7 but I strongly sympathize with my friends,
8 neighbors and many relatives who are faced with
9 the possibility that it's going through their
10 land, and I know growing up on my home farm
11 where I still live, live in the same house for
12 58 years next month, I can sympathize with them
13 because I know we are not supposed to get
14 emotional here but half these family farms, I
15 have been a dairy farmer most of my life but I
16 know what it means to grow up on a family farm,
17 the struggles you go through taking care of your
18 crops and livestock. It's not a 9 to 5 job.
19 You do what you have to do when you have to do
20 it because you love what you do, you love the
21 fact that you are producing food for this
22 country and for the world and you actually love
23 the fact that you have been brought up on that
24 farm, you got a history and a tradition on that

1 farm and it means a lot to you what you do and
2 the fact that the family has had that farm for
3 so many years, and I don't think it's fair that
4 these farms could be taken away to solve one
5 problem in Chicago could create thousands of
6 problems throughout Wisconsin and Illinois and
7 Indiana. Thank you.

8 CAROL WICKERSHAM: Carol Wickersham,
9 W-I-C-K-E-R-S-H-A-M. I live in the Village of
10 Clinton. Mostly what I want to do is underline
11 what my neighbors have already said, but I want
12 to raise it mostly in the form of questions to
13 be answered before any approval would be
14 granted.

15 It's obvious that in addition to
16 speeding up transit time that from the width of
17 the right-of-way, that significant additional
18 volume is anticipated so my first question is
19 how much and what? Not just with the initial
20 first track but with all the additional tracks
21 which are anticipated with all of the additional
22 tracks. Each cumulative track, what additional
23 volume and what will be transported?

24 My next question has to do with the

1 right-of-way as well. The additional space
2 that's allotted for additional kinds of
3 development, in particular utilities or
4 pipelines, what would these pipes be carrying?
5 How would this additional development change the
6 property values? How would it change in the
7 property values change the tax rates? How would
8 the change in the tax rates change what we have
9 to fund our schools and our public services?

10 Finally, and this has not been brought
11 before, it's very clear if you do an overlay of
12 the maps, that the reason that the track is
13 routed the way it is it runs right along the
14 St. Peter Sandstone Formation. It's a formation
15 that runs uniquely right through the center of
16 Wisconsin and it's uniquely suited for frac sand
17 mining.

18 My question is: Was this taken into
19 consideration when the route was planned? Were
20 there conversations between GLB and anyone else
21 about the routing of this track? How will the
22 rail line increase frac sand mines. How would
23 the frac sand mines affect the property values
24 in our area? How would it affect the land use?

1 How would it affect the public health and
2 safety?

3 I'd like to look at all of these
4 effects in terms of the short term, the long
5 term and the cumulative effects. Thank you very
6 much.

7 MR. GRAVES: Is there anyone present
8 who has not spoken this evening that would like
9 to give an oral comment to the Board? If you
10 could come on up here and just line up for me
11 that would be very helpful. Thank you.

12 MATTHEW BRANDL: My name is Matthew
13 Brandl, M-A-T-T-H-E-W B-R-A-N-D-L. Thank you
14 guys for coming all the way out here. I
15 appreciate it. I know you are very busy. I
16 just got a couple bullet points, and I will skip
17 some of them because they have been gone through
18 a few times.

19 So I was looking up some information on
20 the noise level of trains and at 45 miles per
21 hour, a diesel train a hundred feet away
22 produces a sound of 83 decibels which can
23 cause -- start to cause hearing damage after
24 eight hours. I know my neighbor's house is --

1 within the proposed route is within 50 feet of
2 their driveway, probably going to be very close
3 to a hundred feet of their house.

4 I own a dairy farm with my dad and my
5 wife who you have seen up here and it runs
6 through the edge of our property and I was
7 wondering when you guys are doing your study, it
8 sounded like when you are speaking at the
9 beginning you do a very intensive study, if you
10 would be interested in coming out, I don't know
11 how you do your noise testing, I would love to
12 see how our animals responded to how loud the
13 train is going to be because I haven't been able
14 to find how loud a 70 mile an hour train is, so
15 I would be very curious about that.

16 If you want my information, I can give
17 it to you afterwards. My address is 10817 East
18 Lakeshore Road in Clinton, Wisconsin and my
19 phone number is (608) 289-3885.

20 Just some random statistics here. I
21 was reading an article in the Iowa State Farmer
22 where some scientists are saying that we need to
23 double the food supply by 2050 to feed the world
24 and, you know, obviously taking the farmland

1 away isn't going to help that. In Rock County
2 it's proposed 575 acres will be taken out of
3 production for this. Rock County the average
4 yield for corn last year is 184 bushels per acre
5 which is just under 10 percent of the national
6 average. For soybeans it was 52 bushels per
7 acre which is just over 10 percent above the
8 national average.

9 If you take those average yields that
10 makes corn that's grown on anyway it makes each
11 acre worth about \$736 of income for the farmer
12 if they were to plant corn.

13 Questions that I have that I don't have
14 answers to but I guess it's your guys' job to
15 find out I hope would be I heard it is supposed
16 to be 1 percent grade slope up or down and that
17 will just have huge effects outside of the
18 proposed 200 feet that they take but as far as,
19 you know, stopping water and creating new hills
20 and making valleys, I was just curious how that
21 would affect the lay of the land and water
22 movement.

23 I know there is another railroad that
24 runs just southeast of Clinton, and I think that

1 No. 1, I think they do -- I know it's a
2 different company and everything like that but I
3 was just wondering how we could -- if this does
4 get approval, we could use -- their
5 right-of-ways always looked trashed, scrub
6 trees. They mow it maybe once a year. The
7 grass is really tall. There is standing water.
8 There is not proper drainage underneath the
9 rail. Almost all summer there is standing water
10 there, and also there is three bridges closed
11 just in Rock County, two in Bradford, I guess
12 the other one is in Walworth County but I know
13 that the townships have tried to work with them
14 and the railroad just basically don't do
15 anything about it.

16 My uncle is chairman of the Sharon
17 Township and he has been fighting for years to
18 get it down and they just pretty much ignore him
19 so I was just wondering how we can assure that
20 if it does go through that these bridges will be
21 maintained and crossings and, you know, will we
22 be able to work with them, so, thank you.

23 ANDREA BRIARMOON: My name is Andrea
24 B-R-I-A-R-M-O-O-N. I am the descendant of dairy

1 farmers and I grew up in rural Rock County, and
2 I am currently a towny transplant living in
3 town, and what I am seeing here tonight is the
4 playing field. I am hearing citizens speak from
5 their heart out of need, out of work ethic, out
6 of care, out of fairness, out of pride, out of
7 values, out of logic, out of passion, out of
8 reason, out of tradition and out of purpose.

9 I am reading literature from a
10 corporation that's dealing with power and
11 leverage, compensation, votes, corporate welfare
12 and lobbyists. I see the State of Wisconsin
13 being pitted against the State of Illinois. I
14 see the states of Wisconsin and Illinois pitted
15 against the federal government and I see
16 citizens pitted against a corporation. And my
17 questions are there is you and two other people
18 on your Board. How long have you been on this
19 Board, and how are you appointed to this Board,
20 you and your other two people and by whom were
21 you appointed?

22 And how are you compensated for being
23 on this Board? And what is your interest and
24 what are your qualifications for being on this

1 Board and how might we get copies of your resume
2 and the resume of the other two Board members?
3 And what is the annual budget for your agency
4 and what is the number of agency employees that
5 work for your agency?

6 And it's obvious this corporation is
7 getting corporate welfare, probably in multiple
8 forms. How might a person find out the total
9 percentage of the budget of this proposed
10 project coming from we, the taxpayers, in the
11 form of corporate welfare?

12 And then the other question is that we
13 have converted thousands of miles of railroad
14 tracks into bike paths. What would it take to
15 convert them back? Thank you.

16 THERESA ALLEN-HUBKA: My name is
17 Theresa Allen-Hubka and that's A-L-L-E-N hypen
18 H-U-B-K-A. I am sitting here. I wasn't going
19 to speak tonight, but I am thinking about how
20 this really affects even just my household.

21 See, as a community, we all pull
22 together and between volunteering and promoting
23 our community, I can tell you that I am the
24 president of the Pelishek-Tiffany Nature Trail

1 Foundation and I can say to the two gentlemen
2 who started that trail the hard work involved
3 and it is now a Rock County trail. Probably one
4 of the longest too.

5 It's my understanding that perhaps a
6 bridge would go over the trail in regards to the
7 rail is laughable because now we are going to
8 still call it a nature trail?

9 My husband who is president of a
10 snowmobile club who works diligently with its
11 volunteers -- see, we work with our farmers who
12 graciously allow us to use their land to promote
13 the snowmobile trail which in regards affects
14 not only the snowmobiles but our businesses as
15 well, who snowmobiling if whether permitting
16 allows us to do so.

17 As Chairman of the Town of Clinton
18 Planning and Zoning Committee, I can tell you we
19 have worked tirelessly to save our farmland and
20 this is why we have farmland preservation. This
21 is why we have comprehensive plans and this is
22 why also as a Town of Clinton supervisor, I can
23 tell you that the struggles for the fire
24 department and what Fire Chief Rindfleisch tells

1 you are true. They couldn't be more true and
2 for the safety of our constituents in the
3 Township of Clinton as well as the Village.

4 So it is real and not only to mention
5 personally it affects my property value. The
6 train is coming behind my property. I live
7 right by the nature trail so that's really all I
8 wanted to say, but I wasn't going to speak but
9 it does affect us greatly, so thank you for your
10 time.

11 DEAN BLASER: Hi there. My name is
12 Dean Blaser, B-L-A-S-E-R. So not to regurgitate
13 a lot of things that were said tonight, my
14 family -- it affects my family because it comes
15 within about 300 feet of our farm. That's
16 pretty close but to jump on some of the things
17 said about the fire safety, now you got to
18 remember, that you already put a new bypass
19 around the City of Milton which cut out County M
20 which was a direct line to Johnstown Township so
21 now the fire department already has extra time
22 to get to farms and homes out into the Johnstown
23 Township.

24 Now you want to compound it by cutting

1 off a bunch of roads, because now you are only
2 going to choose have to take Highway 59 or I am
3 assuming County A, so, and all the other roads
4 are going to be closed between that. So you are
5 just going to make a situation worse by doing
6 so. Thank you.

7 JOHN HILLMANN: Good evening. Thank
8 you for coming to listen to our points that we
9 want to express to you. My name is John
10 Hillmann, H-I-L-L-M-A-N-N. I am not a land
11 owner directly affected but I am a landowner's
12 son and one of the large concerns that I had
13 when I heard they were offering their land -- on
14 purchasing the land and maybe 20,000 an acre,
15 the word purchasing set me off because the
16 County of Rock is -- Rock County is not friendly
17 of breaking apart farms and portions of farms.

18 One can easily argue that they penalize
19 landowners for doing that. Let me break that
20 down and explain that in more detail by going
21 into a little mini case study.

22 The parcel that this track runs across
23 for my father might only be a quarter of a mile
24 long, the portion it runs across, but,

1 unfortunately, that farm is on a County road.
2 Because it's on a County road, now there is a
3 little explanation I probably need to mention is
4 that there is easement roads and then there is
5 dedicated to public road right-of-ways.

6 Right now that farm they are going to
7 cross is an easement road so he owns the center
8 line. To be able to break off a parcel from
9 that property, they are going to require him to
10 give up the 40-foot of right-of-way and dedicate
11 it to the public in full at just a nice little
12 gift to the County.

13 Specifically in 2012 they wanted to
14 break up the buildings, the value of that land
15 is currently assessed it was about \$22,000 so
16 let's say, for example, if he is running a new
17 railroad -- the railroad proposed runs a quarter
18 mile of the farm, to make life simple, let's say
19 it takes up an acre of land, because of the
20 length of that road adjacent, he is going to
21 have to give up four or five acres to the County
22 free of charge, so he may get 30,000 for that
23 couple acres or that acre that's running through
24 his farm but he had to give up far more along

1 the road.

2 Now the next thing they are doing is
3 when they break up the parcel out in the
4 country, and I have been watching on the County
5 site, they are requiring that the landowner give
6 up building rights so he is going to have to
7 give up all of this building rights to ever put
8 buildings on that property down the road.

9 Now, when I take a look at what land
10 trust reimburse people for giving up their
11 development rights, they are approximately
12 65 percent of the sale value of the property.
13 So for them to come through, let's say it's an
14 80 acre field and they want to take a portion
15 out of that and let's just make math easy, at
16 \$10,000 an acre that would be an \$800,000 farm.

17 Well, you go and break that off, take
18 away all of the development rights, you take
19 away the roadway rights and all of a sudden he
20 has got only \$350,000 left in value of that
21 property only good for putting agriculture on or
22 letting trees grow in the woods. That is part
23 of a socioeconomic cost that's not being
24 considered in this railway coming through this

1 farmland.

2 GLENN JACKSON: Glenn Jackson,
3 G-L-E-N-N J-A-C-K-S-O-N. Just because it's late
4 don't make it right. Eminent domain for private
5 gain it affects the environment of our parents,
6 of our grandparents, of us, our children and our
7 grandchildren and even their children years and
8 years down the road. What was once there
9 because we all got to enjoy will no longer be
10 there, and I am not a very good speaker and
11 that's really all I got. Thank you.

12 MR. GRAVES: Ladies and gentlemen, this
13 ends the oral comment portion of tonight's
14 meeting. Thank you everyone in providing
15 comments.

16 If you have not made comments and would
17 like to do so, you can certainly go to the
18 Surface Transportation Board website and submit
19 written comments there or you can mail them into
20 the US Postal Service.

21 I think Dave mentioned during his
22 presentation that the comment period has been
23 extended to June 15th, so with that, we are
24 adjourned. Thank you very much.

4/18/2016

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that I, PAULA ANN ERICKSON, CSR, RPR, CLR and Notary Public, do hereby certify that I reported in machine shorthand the proceedings held at the Great Lakes Basin Rail Line EIS Public Scoping Meeting, on April 18, 2016 and that this transcript is a true and accurate transcription of my machine shorthand notes so taken to the best of my ability.



PAULA ERICKSON, CSR, RPR

License No. 084-003899

Dated this 1st day
of May 2016.

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