

CHUCK HAMILTON
135 CALLE MAYOR
REDONDO BEACH, CA

EI-24662

July 6, 2016

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

REF: **Docket No. FD 35952**

Dear Mr. Navecky,

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

According to the route narrative, the proposed path between mile posts 155 to 170 has “no wetlands, wooded areas, or waterways affected by this segment.” This statement is simply not true. Even a casual observation of the aerial view / map provided by their website shows the extensive waterways and streams in these fields and lands. Many of them would be bisected by the proposed railway.

(ref Map 10) http://greatlakesbasinraileis.com/documents/GLB_Scoping_DetailMaps_24k_10.pdf

Further, when the US I-39 Interstate construction occurred in the late 1970s and early 1980s, adjacent to the mile markers noted above, many properties within this area were split or cut into by the interstate right-of-way. When this occurred, the Illinois/U.S. Departments of Transportation had to construct grades along the interstate corridor to provide proper drainage for the highway. These grade incursions adversely affected the fields’ drainage and anti-erosion practices already put in place. In order to mitigate the damage done when the interstate corridor grades were built, the owners of these properties, by necessity and as responsible stewards of the land, implemented further environmental best-practices improvements. (The map [link above] of our property located between mileage markers 166 & 167 clearly shows what we did at that time: we installed best-practices French drains.)

The proposed railway would create yet *another* grading situation. But in this case, the additionally proposed railroad right-of-way grades through these environmentally improved and compliant properties will *undo* the previous considerations undertaken when the environmentally-favorable work was completed at the time the interstate was constructed. Having *two* graded constructions (highway and railroad) within a few hundred-feet of each other (please refer again to the linked map) will create miles of grade-locked land which will consequently result in, by necessity, the creation of new access roads to reach land-locked fields. But the grades themselves will create the further negative environmental impacts of:

- reduced run-off management,
- increased ponding, and
- concentrations of pollutants caused by (new) road and (new) railroad contaminants.

Therefore, the proposed route should *not* be one that creates new grades in such close proximity to the existing ones. The best alternative with the least environmental impact is to route the railroad alongside existing railroad right-of-ways (Rochelle to Shabbona to Earlville). Essentially, such a route would follow the same path as the proposed railroad route. However, these are existing grades; they have the correct infrastructure and any environmental issues there already have been addressed.

Thank you for your kind consideration of my concerns.

Sincerely,
Chuck Hamilton
Chuck Hamilton

Chuck Hamilton
135 Calle Mayor
Redondo Beach, CA
90277

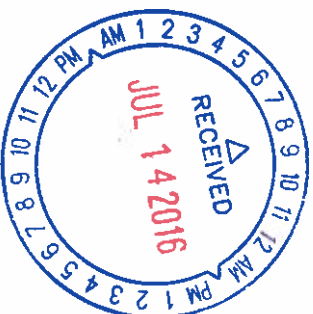
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