



**STATE OF INDIANA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

THIRD FLOOR STATE HOUSE

INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA 46204

EI-24262

SCOTT D. PELATH
HOUSE DEMOCRATIC LEADER
200 W. WASHINGTON ST.
INDIANAPOLIS, IN 46204

June 6, 2016

Mr. David Navecky
Surface Transportation Board
395 E. Street, SW
Washington, D.C., 20423-0001

Dear Mr. Navecky:

I support the Town of Westville's resolution opposing the proposed Great Lakes Basin Railroad (GLBR) route through LaPorte County. As conscientious Hoosiers, they dutifully have suggested an alternative that would not tear apart their town.

As the state representative for Westville since 1998, I share the community's concerns for the project as presently imagined. Therefore, I appreciate your consideration of Westville's detailed resolution along with my own views.

As town officials clearly state in their resolution, adoption of the current GLBR route would detrimentally affect the town. First, the proposal dissects the community at U.S. Highway 421, in direct contradiction to the GLBR's stated approach "to avoid building the railroad through any towns" viewable on the project's website. Further, this obstacle would greatly impede response times for law enforcement and fire protection very difficult. This says nothing of the fact that emergency responders are currently incapable of handling a massive crisis caused by potential train derailment or other such disasters.

The GLBR route also would choke future development along U.S. 421, an area currently populated by Purdue University Northwest. Officials expect more economic development in the next five to ten years, and as Westville leaders indicate in their resolution, the route is also likely to taint drinking water wells due to its proximity to the potable water supply.

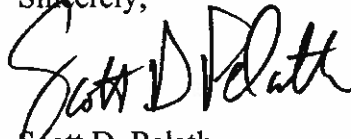
Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the GLBR proposal would cause heavy train activity into two residential areas: New Durham Estates and Water Tower Place. This activity bears serious implications for noise pollution, decreased property values, and the practical use of private property.

The Westville alternative works to mitigate these negative impacts through a common sense approach worthy of consideration. The alternative proposes to utilize the Canadian Northern line existing between Valparaiso and South Bend, which altogether eliminates the need for twelve miles of the GLBR line through LaPorte County and the Town of Westville. If the GLBR cannot be avoided, the alternative at least would allow for the Westville community to continue to thrive with its current character.

In consideration of this project, it is imperative that entities like the Surface Transportation Board conduct the maximum number of public meetings in the most transparent manner. I echo the assertion of town officials who believe that affected residents have yet to be fully informed or notified on the scope and impact of the GLBR project. It is crucial that area residents are given appropriate time to receive and analyze pertinent information which could change their lives.

Please take the input of Westville citizens seriously. To that end, if I can answer any question or be of assistance in facilitating future discussions with town officials or residents, please let me know at any time. Thank you again for serious consideration of my appeal on behalf of my very concerned constituents.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott D. Pelath". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping "S" and a distinct "P".

Scott D. Pelath
House Minority Leader

Cc: Ms. Brandye Hendrickson, INDOT Commissioner
Mr. David A. Hall, Vice President of Government Relations, CSX



STATE OF INDIANA

REPRESENTATIVE

SCOTT D. PELATH

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INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA 46204

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