

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

October 21, 2016

Dear Dave and Board Members.

Please say **NO** to the Great Lakes Basin Railroad.

The Great Lakes Basin Railroad's newest north-south route thru western Winnebago County will be less than half a mile from my house on a country road.

1. A daughter drives more than 10 miles to come to my house to fill gallon jugs with well water because she likes the taste. How will this proposed railroad affect my water supply?
2. Many country roads will need to be dissected if this proposed rail line comes to be. This will delay emergency response times.
  1. Currently there is only one Winnebago County Sheriff's Department officer (per shift) covering the western part of the county. A secondary back-up takes **10 minutes or more, depending on origin and availability**, to arrive. Fire and ambulance personnel would also lose precious minutes if four (4) east-west country roads are "cut by the rails" between Rt. 70 and Rt. 75.
  2. United States Post Office vehicles, UPS, Fed Ex, milk trucks, farm trucks and equipment, as well as residents would all be using more gasoline to weave in-and-out of these dead-end roads.
  3. Vandalism will increase on dead-end roads, and potentially at the switching stations.
3. From my perspective as a former Amtrak employee, I see many curves, and 45 degree angle turns (especially in Kankakee County) on the entire proposed map. Very poor design.

How can it possibly be efficient to "bend" a freight train?

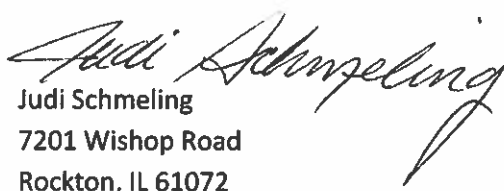
4. It's more than corn fields
  - a) The new north-south route thru western Winnebago Country includes being less than a mile from an elementary school in Shirland, dairy farms (at least 3), an established apple orchard, long time Christmas tree farm, camping along a river, and a "high end" bed and breakfast. Nearby is also an organic vegetable farm.
  - b) Small acreage residential properties near the proposed line will decline in value. Will those owners then receive reduced property taxes, or have their taxes eliminated all together to compensate for a forced lifestyle change?
5. The "lure" of more jobs and progress is "a double edged sword" if it reduces the income of those already on the land.
  - a) In a depressed economy with jobs hard to find, who will be assisting those displaced? Will each county need to financially support those people for the balance of their lives?
  - c) Initially, the majority of jobs would be for only a few years for the construction of the rail lines. Very few jobs would be needed for the switching stations. Short-haul transport would then be the next opportunity for jobs. Who is to say any of these jobs would be using local people? Crews could be arriving from other parts of the country, while the rest of us sadly stand and watch.

Overall, is this an updated version of the story "The Emperor's New Clothes?" The talk is great and the promises are many. The reality could be quite shocking. There is no guarantee of success.

**People are more important than profits.**

**Please say NO to the entire Great Lakes Basin Railroad proposal.**

Thank you,

  
Judi Schmeling  
7201 Wishop Road  
Rockton, IL 61072

Cc: Winnebago County Board –Scott Christiansen/ Jim Webster