



Willow Chamber of Commerce

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May 9, 2010

David Navecky
STB Finance Docket No 35095
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street SW
Washington, DC 20423-0001

Please be advised that the Willow Chamber of Commerce has been and remains to be a strong proponent of the Willow West Rail Corridor Spur. Our chamber recently completed a study that found there to be over 1,000 private properties, lots and plots within one-half mile of the of the current rail alignment. The Willow West alignment is the only route that would decrease the projected increases of rail traffic through our community. On grade rail crossings are safety concerns to us as well as an increase in whistle requirements. We look at a new transportation corridor and utilities easement as a chance at a well planned and safe way to approach the future.

The vocal minority in Willow are fearful that this rail alignment will negatively impact their East to West trails but we see this corridor as a chance to improve North and South trails. Good or bad impact will depend on proper engineering of trail crossings but we keep in mind that those trails are only used for about 3 ½ winter months each year.

Two weeks ago there were state wide emergency response exercises that staged natural disasters. The exercises that our local responders reported to was a large earthquake centered near Houston on the Castle Mountain Fault. This exercise emphasized the probability of a crippled transportation system that would paralyze both rail and road traffic in our area. If the Willow west spur was built it would bypass the Castle Mountain fault and provide travelers and freight a means to reach the ferry and boats out of the Port.

There are many other reasons why we support this route but basically they all come back to the fact that this route has fewer chances for conflict in the future. It will cost more now to save a lot more later due to law suits and further construction costs to fit in between the growing population.

Thank you,

Jim Huston, President
Willow Chamber of Commerce

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