

4085 East 1553 Road

Earlville, Illinois 60518

June 10, 2016

Mr. Dave Navecky

Surface Transportation Board

Docket #FD 35952

395 E Street, SW

Washington, DC 20423-0001

Dear Mr. Navecky:

The Surface Transportation Board needs to **oppose** the Great Lakes Basin Railroad proposal. Spring has always been my favorite season—a time of renewal and planting on my family's third generation farm. Since learning of the Great Lakes Basin railroad proposal in early March, however, everyone in or near its projected path has experienced soaring stress levels, and for good reason, due to its lack of need and alarming potential environmental impact.

If the Chicago Regional Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE) program is only 70% complete, delayed due to the lack of federal government and state of Illinois funding, then it makes **more** sense to complete this project to resolve the rail congestion, instead of launching a "pie in the sky" project, complete with a ludicrous price tag of \$6-8 billion. Other railroads have expressed **no** interest in the project. Mr. Frank Patton, managing partner and founder of GLB Transportation, claimed at Morris High School on May 2, 2016, that this venture would take a million trucks off the road. What about those drivers' jobs? What about farmers' jobs, if they lose their farms? What about those who rely on the farming industry for business/income? The only parties getting rich quick here are opportunistic **Patton** and his **unidentified investors**, and they should not get away with ruining our lives and farms.

Of course this topic raises blood pressure! Having **such** short notice to react to **such** a potential loss of land at **such** an important time of the farming year has been enough to cause countless sleepless nights and even Mr. Robert Jornlin's heart attack, after the farmer and U. S. veteran spoke out against the project at a meeting in Rochelle, Illinois, on April 20, 2016. We **are** very concerned about spills/toxins that could be released. **Who** is trained to clean up? **Who** pays? I heard the Sheridan, Illinois, fire chief express concerns about any fire department's ability to arrive quickly to a fire if roads are closed and they must drive miles out of the way to extinguish a blaze. **Who** pays for the extra damage sustained while waiting for

them? **What about** the ambulance runs that result in tragedies, again due to detouring roads that have closed? **How** can unnecessary loss of life be explained to family? On May 2, 2016, Patton boasted **investors** that this will be the longest, quietest railroad ever built—few horns. **This sounds like a series of tragedies, waiting to happen.** As for the flyovers, I had too many injured students missing or late for class, due to slipping and rolling down them in inclement weather. Patton claims that the railroad will pay for all crossings to be maintained; are they also planning to pay for time lost as farmers have to sit and wait for a train to pass every 13 minutes? Patton's smug sneer that "There's only so much you can do" regarding the safety of this project is immature, shortsighted, and downright alarming, perfect fodder for lawsuits.

Wildlife cannot defend itself against such disruption. Eagles fly over our fields and nest in our timber, but nothing can block the continual train whistles and noise of 110 trains daily, every thirteen minutes. **Should eagles have to give up and fly away, or just become extinct?**

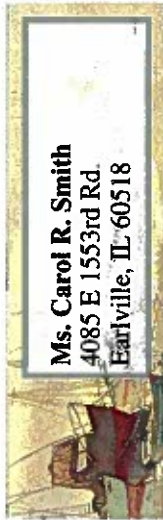
In the standing room only auditorium at Seneca High School on April 21, 2016, IL Rep. Sue Rezin stated that you folks need to listen to these farmers and businessmen. We take pains to live honest, clean lives, and we respect and are proud to be stewards of our family farms. We know the history of our land, and my parents and neighbors had our farms designated as Ag Acres years ago in an effort to thwart such endeavors as Patton's. We resent the threat of eminent domain invading our livelihood, for we are Americans and expect to be treated as such. The arrogance that Mr. Frank Patton exhibited to the Morris High School gym of farmers and concerned citizens shows how very little respect he has for those who raise food and products for him to consume, that is, when he isn't putting his foot in his mouth!

In the end, everyone—vegetarian or not—has to eat, and the food and products that come from our developed, prime farmland will be greatly compromised if the railroad rolls on through anyway. **Please know that we do not want our prime, developed, updated fields split, tiles crushed, roads closed, air and land polluted, accident rates escalated, and land values plummeted, all over an unneeded railroad. Simplify, as we do! We already pay too much in taxes. Squelch this pipedream that will harm far more than it will ever help!** I ask that you **oppose** the Great Lakes Basin RR proposal, due to lack of need and potential negative environmental impact. **We want no railroad, no 50 foot easements; we want to have a right to live without the threat of eminent domain hammering at our back door.** It is still spring, a time of hope and renewal, but our land is **nonrenewable**. Please do not let us down.

Very truly yours,



Carol R. Smith



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Earlville, IL 60518



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