



LIMESTONE TOWNSHIP FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

4948 W. Route 17
Kankakee, IL 60901

Established in 1951



June 27, 2016

Mr. Dave Navecky
Surface Transportation Board
DOCKET No.: FD **35952** Great Lakes Basin Transportation Corp, LLC Project
395 E. Street SW
Washington, DC 20423-0001

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OFFICE OF THE CLERK

Honorable Daniel R. Elliott III, Chairman
United States Surface Transportation Board
DOCKET No.: FD **35952** – Great Lakes Basin Transportation Corp, LLC Project
395 E. Street SW
Washington, DC 20423-0001

Dear Mr. Navecky and the Honorable Mr. Elliott,

The Limestone Township Fire Protection District serves a geographic area in Kankakee County, Illinois that lays west of the Kankakee city limits. Our District provides fire, rescue, Emergency Medical Services (EMS), and Hazardous Materials Mitigation within our jurisdiction. Additionally, we mutually respond with Salina Township Fire Protection District on all fire calls in both Districts and provide contract EMS Paramedic Service to the Salina Fire Protection District.

The proposed rail project identifies that our Fire District will be impacted on the Northwest portion of our Public Safety jurisdiction. Our highest concern is the overall safety of our residents, those traveling through our Fire District, as well as the safety of our First Responders on any incident. We have these concerns that we need to submit for consideration.

"So That Others Might Live"

SAFETY

- The project lists the closing of many rural grade crossings. This will increase the response time of our agency to many emergency calls by requiring longer routes and lengthening the response time to handle an emergency.
- With substantially increased rail traffic, our concern of a higher risk factor that would induce more emergency events. As a small rural Fire Protection District, we are concerned that inadequate resources and training may pose additional demands on our staff and its resources.
- If the need for the District to scale-up their training for railroad connected incidents, considerable more firefighter/EMS training would be required for this specialized Fire and Rescue, a cost that would be difficult for us to meet and maintain on an annual basis.
- As a farm community, large amounts of slow moving equipment will traverse the area including Tractors, Combines, along with trucks and wagons for grain removal. These will be added risks for designated train crossings that are stated to be frequented with trains as often as every fifteen minutes.
- This appears to make this rail proposal extremely busy and also brings into consideration the many local school buses that would traverse the crossings numerous times on a daily basis when school is in session.
- With the numerous trains passing through, it would be appropriate that the rail lines would provide a summary list of all potential products being transported, so that Fire Protection Districts can do advanced training and planning to be better prepared with these products, in the event that an emergency scene is required. Such list would allow inter-district training in advance to allow for better scene mitigation and could easily be provided for emergency responders by utilizing a web based site that could be accessed by the responding agencies via I-Phone or I-Pad. Nothing is stated in the original proposal for that information.
- During the time of construction, little is known about the overall plan to allow facilitation of emergency vehicles their due access to the scene of such declared emergency events. This needs to be specific to allow minimum disruption of our emergency vehicles getting to the scene.

WATER RESOURCES

- Rural areas DO NOT have pressurized water supply systems such as water hydrants. Large water volumes in these areas are obtained by surface and ground water where it is transported to the scene of the emergency with Fire District water tenders. Moving large volumes of water for railroad incidents are very time consuming, slow, and require additional resources, equipment, and manpower which add up to additional expenses that we will not have available. Also, railroad incidents that are designated as "Hazardous Materials," could jeopardize the use of our local water supplies for emergency purposes, not to mention the loss of a vital resource.

SOCIOECONOMICS

- With the influx of temporary construction workers, the demand for our services may increase without a noted increase of revenue. The additional costs would then fall on the backs of the local taxing residents, which is unacceptable.

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

- It remains unclear if the proposed railroad would provide tax revenue to the local community and its taxing units of government. A clear prioritization and understanding of this structure needs to be established PRIOR, to insure that the local Fire Districts are provided adequate revenue for the increased costs it incurs handling the railroad related calls. These Districts MUST KNOW who is responsible, when & where the revenue originates, and on what time table it follows. Adding additional operating costs without further revenue is impossible in smaller units of local government.

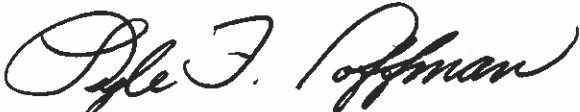
LAND VALUES

- A very aspect of this proposed project begs the question, "what will happen to land values?" This question is extremely important to this Fire Protection District, as well as the entire resident base of the area we serve. Our annual Budgets and Tax Levies are predicated on the equalized assessment valuation (EAV) as it relates to the real estate property within our jurisdiction. Should the project reduce the EAV once completed, it will also

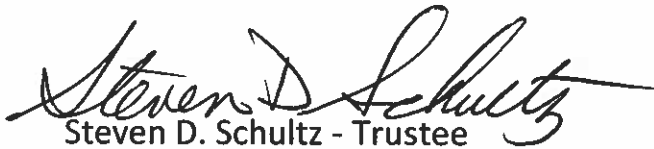
reduce our primary source of income with the ultimate effect of reducing our entire budget. The end result will require the Board of Trustees to reduce or alter services to a program that has taken decades to build and establish.

The safety of our citizens and the First Responders are the top priority. Changing the way we do business because of major alterations to our landscape, remains of great concern to this Board as well. We believe these concerns should be addressed by the Surface Transportation Board through a full Environmental Impact Statement.

Respectfully,


Lyle F. Coffman – Trustee


George P. Grosso – Trustee

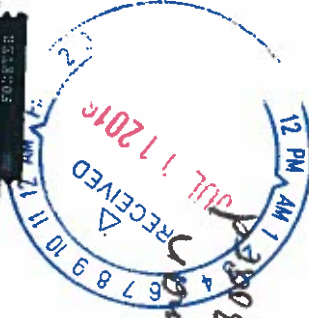

Steven D. Schultz - Trustee



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