



STATE OF INDIANA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
THIRD FLOOR STATE HOUSE
INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA 46204

EI-22924

200 W. Washington Street
Indianapolis, IN 46204

May 20, 2016

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

Dear Mr. Navecky,

We are writing to express our concern and opposition to the proposed rail project by the Great Lakes Basin Transportation, Inc. (GLBT) in northwest Indiana. After hearing numerous public comments from our constituents, it is obvious that they do not want the construction of this proposed railroad in our community.

The impacts to both the human environment and the physical environment are numerous. The human environmental impact includes public safety issues of several new surface rail crossings and longer response times for emergency responders. The local emergency responders, especially fire departments, are not currently equipped to adequately respond to any rail disaster. Additionally, the six school districts involved will have many more at grade crossings to contend with thus endangering young lives. Other important factors are the noise and vibration that will forever alter the serene rural environment that generations have enjoyed.

The physical land use of farms and rural residences would be changed in a negative manner. Most farms in northwest Indiana have a complex series of underground drains (often referred to as tile drains) which will be damaged beyond normal operational field drainage. Most of these drains are private and are not maintained or regulated by any public agency. The natural surface drainage will be impeded and rerouted in an unknown manner. The use of center irrigation pivots on farmland will be limited and access to landlocked parcels will be restricted or not made available.

The proposed railroad crosses all eight major watersheds and attending wetlands in the three county area. A serious potential exists for contamination of the waters of the State. Several permits will be needed from the Indiana Department of Environmental Management, the Indiana Department of Natural Resources as well as the USEPA, USACOE and the Federal Fish and Wildlife Service.

Finally in summation the project is not justified. We see no positive cost/benefit ratio given by GLBT. The proposed rail line appears to be put forth solely on speculation. We strongly recommend the project not move forward until acceptance by those affected can be ascertained. We ask that you not spend federal dollars needlessly on a project that does not have proven transparent financial backing.

Thank you for any consideration that the Surface Transportation Board can give our request. Please do not hesitate to contact our offices if you have any further questions about our concerns with this proposed project in northwest Indiana.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael J. Aylesworth". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end.

Michael J. Aylesworth
Indiana State Representative
House District 11

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rick Niemeyer". The signature is cursive and elegant, with a small dot at the end.

Rick Niemeyer
Indiana State Senator
Senate District 6

MJA;jh