

PURDUE

UNIVERSITY

OFFICE OF THE DEAN

Jay T. Akridge

Glenn W. Sample Dean of Agriculture

June 27, 2016

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

Dear Mr. Navecky,

Our College of Agriculture at Purdue University has been made aware that Great Lakes Basin Transportation, Inc. (GLBT) has applied for permitting in order to pursue a Class I freight rail line around the greater Chicago Illinois area and through northwest Indiana. The proposed route through eastern Porter County in Indiana has the 2-track rail line crossing the western part of our 670-acre Pinney-Purdue Agricultural Center (PPAC).

PPAC is one of our College of Agriculture's most active research farms and currently hosts over 80 field studies focused in the areas of row and specialty crop production. If the rail line is approved as proposed at present, the potential direct impact to research and outreach activities at PPAC would include the following:

- **United State Department of Agriculture-Agricultural Research Service (USDA-ARS) Soybean Studies** – The western farm fields at PPAC host a longer term soybean yield study under a supplemental irrigation environment. The rail line would threaten the continuation of the study in addition to halting the ability to irrigate the crops in the impacted field.
- **State of Indiana-Funded Corn Fertility Studies** - State supported field corn fertility studies would be threatened by the rail line including the ability to provide supplemental irrigation to this long term research effort.
- **State of Indiana-Funded Soybean Date-of-Planting Study** – Continuation of state supported planting study examining yield of soybean relative to date-of-planting would be threatened by the rail line. This is a longer term study with results unique and directly relatable to soybean growers in northwest Indiana.
- **Impact to Moving Farm Equipment and Field Event Attendees** – Being one of the most intensively utilized off campus farms at Purdue University, PPAC hosts an annual field day with attendance typically over 350 with overall annual event attendees well over 1,000. PPAC must be able to safely move field day and other event attendees in addition to farm equipment around PPAC and doing so will be negatively affected by a limited access rail line. College of Agriculture administration at Purdue has estimated that as proposed, the rail lines will essentially separate over 100 acres of the western side of PPAC from reasonable public and on-farm staff access.



College of Agriculture

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- **Soil Water Drainage & Irrigation** – Rail line development across the productive, but somewhat poorly drained loam soil at PPAC could adversely impact natural soil water movement towards the on-farm drainage ditch. This coupled with the loss of use of the linear irrigation system near the ditch could reduce or even eliminate the use of the western fields at PPAC for row crop field research studies.

Purdue University does not in any way want to hinder economic development efforts such as this proposed GLBT rail line, but rather wants to clearly make known the potential negative impact the rail line would have to high value field research activities and overall use of this research farm. Our College of Agriculture at Purdue does hope that if this rail line moves towards approval, the section of the rail line crossing PPAC can be modified in a way to eliminate or at least lessen the negative impact to field research studies and other efforts noted previously.

As a state-funded university with a land grant mission to benefit stakeholders in Indiana and beyond, Purdue and specifically our College of Agriculture stands ready to provide additional information and/or discuss more thoroughly the potential impact of the GLBT rail line proposal. More information about PPAC can be found online at: <https://ag.purdue.edu/arp/pac/Pages/ppac-home.aspx>.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of Purdue University-College of Agriculture's concerns about this rail line proposal.

Sincerely,



Jay T. Akridge
Glenn W. Sample Dean of Agriculture
Purdue University

cc: Mitchell E. Daniels, Jr.
President, Purdue University

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