

July 15, 2016

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

Dear Mr. Navecky,

The real goal of the Great Lakes Basin Rail Line (GLB) appears to be to make the area surrounding the railway into a light industrial area. The people behind GLB are land developers not railroad people. The current economic development condemnation laws brought about by the 2005 Supreme Court decision, *Kelo v. City of New London*, 545 U.S. 469 (2005) make it easy for wealthy investors to find a few sympathetic “bought” politicians/investors to help them obtain land even when farmers don’t want to sell. Private gain using eminent domain should not be allowed.

It seems that there are many alternative routes using primarily existing railways or abandoned rail right-of-ways that would be significantly less invasive and disruptive to the affected communities. It may also be cheaper and easier to construct a railway using existing railways. The proposed GLB line makes it perfect for the investors to come in and buy up the land after farmers find it too difficult to farm the fields because they are cut-off, drained poorly etc. Thus, leading to development of land into light industrial use and leading to the elimination of farmland, rural communities and ways of life. The price paid for farmland when obtained for industrial use would be a bargain for the investors compared to the usual cost of industrial property. Wealthy investors win; farmers and local residents lose and would ultimately move away once areas are industrialized. With the current cheap tax rates in the rural areas versus the tax rates of industrialized cities, this adds another reason for the GLB’s desire to develop the proposed route. Farmland is irreplaceable. Once lost to industrialization, it does not return. The loss of some of the most productive farmland in America would not be lost to just the GLB taking, it could be a loss of ultimately, hundreds of thousands of acres. It would destroy some of the most peaceful and serene areas that people can live in and enjoy life while still having access to the employment centers of the local cities. This precious commodity should be squandered unnecessarily for the benefit of a few. Surface Transportation Board (STB) should not function as a means to help the rich become richer at the expense of ordinary citizens. The STB should act in best interest of the nation and of the population in the affected area. Creating wealth for a select few should not happen in America.

Sincerely,

*Miranda & Richard Serletic*

Miranda & Richard Serletic