

October 27, 2016

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

Dear Mr. Navecky:

I am writing you to express my concerns on the proposed Great Lakes Basin Rail (GLBR) project. Although I realize that there are many unanswered questions which leave many statistics unknown, I believe there are many adverse impacts on the local economy, along with environment and safety concerns. These impacts make this proposal inconsistent with public convenience.

We have many friends who have long standing farming operations in our area. The proposed route would eliminate nearly 20,000 acres of highly productive farmland in Illinois. Dissecting current fields will leave many uneconomical remnant parcels due to the land becoming landlocked and inaccessible. Other parcels may be accessible, but uneconomical to farm due to the size of the equipment used and the relatively small remaining parcel. Tile drainage systems will also be impacted by this project. Some of our friends that operate dairy operations have significant concerns regarding how the noise and vibration of the trains will affect their dairy herds.

The impact on the environment is very concerning. The proposed route would go through controlled wetland areas that are vital to many species of wildlife. The aquifer that furnishes drinking water to most of Northern Illinois runs under the proposed route. How would just one accident involving a spill of hazardous liquid affect the wildlife and aquifer? Has there been enough environmental testing completed to assure that there will not be any negative effects of an accident? Accidents and spills may be rare, but they do happen, and will happen if this proposal is allowed to move forward.

I realize that the amount of traffic on this proposed route is unknown. It is known, however, that the proposal is being specked for 100 or more trains a day traveling at 70 M.P.H. or faster. I have concerns regarding the safety for all the residents of Winnebago in western Winnebago County. There will be impacts on the routes that fire trucks and EMT's currently use to access citizens. How much longer will it take to respond to emergencies if there are trains in the area? There will be a significant increase to our local school transportation costs due to rerouting existing bus routes to avoid proposed new crossings on the roads surrounding the schools. Longer routes in both duration and distance will require additional buses and drivers. Again, just one possible accident eliminates this as a potential option to bypass the current congestion of the rails in Chicago. I would propose that other alternatives using existing tracks or areas next to existing tracks be evaluated for possible solutions.

Thank you for your time in reading my concerns.

Sincerely,



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