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MANTENO, IL
5/14/16

Mr. Dave Navecky
Surface Transportation Board
395 E. St SW
Washington, D.C.
20423-0001
Docket No. FD-35952

Dear Sir:

In regards to the Great Lakes Basin Railroad Project, I am appalled that a few "big money" investors are once again trying to take over other people's life's work and property by forcing their will upon us without a democratic election process. i.e. a vote of the people, by the people, and for the people to determine what the people's will is concerning this proposal. Instead, we are subjected to a few "informational meetings" during which many of the most important questions are NOT answered because of "confidential" information and then given an opportunity to submit comments about a proposal that we know little or nothing about, in a period that lasts only a few weeks after the proposal is made public. I would hope that this information alone would be enough to cause the Surface Transportation Board to reject this proposal!

I want to voice my objection to the proposed 23 square mile "switching and maintenance yard" which would be the largest in the United States. I question what this yard would be used for? Switching and Maintenance as the planners would like us to believe and what else that they are not talking about? (The present switching yards around Chicago are approximately 3 square miles or less). Would part of this yard possibly be used as a garbage dump that the Kankakee County Board has been trying to site (without success) for over 10 years? Or a transfer yard, where containers would be transferred from train to semi-trailers similar to the one now located in Elwood, Illinois?

Why has this yard been sited only a couple miles from Manteno and Grant Park.? Frank Patton says that it was located close to Manteno because Manteno is about the half-way point of the entire proposed rail line. However, a look at the lay-out of the line shows that the "half way point" would certainly be located somewhere further West of Manteno and not even in the county that Manteno is located in. Manteno does have three major roads running through it, I-57, Highway 50, and Highway 45. Are the planners going to try to use these roads for truck traffic to and from the proposed yard? I hope not, as current access to any of these roads runs through village streets that are NOT designed to handle large amounts of truck traffic.

What about the noise pollution that this yard will create? "Humping" rail cars together is a very noisy process that can be heard literally for miles. What about the air pollution that will be caused by the trucks servicing this yard?

Who will pay for the additional policing required to patrol the bums, transients, taggers, and professional criminals that will be drawn to this yard? Who will pay for any "spills" or other environmental clean-up that will eventually occur in this yard? Kankakee County where this yard would be located is presently so broke that they have had to lay-off many members of the Sheriff's Dept.

What about the safety hazards associated with this yard? With more and more of the freight passing through this area consisting of highly volatile crude oil, who is going to ensure that the personnel operating in this yard will have the proper training to make sure that there are no major fires or explosions in the yard? Or will we be facing situations similar to the one that occurred in Canada where rail cars containing crude exploded and totally destroyed a town?

I am strongly and adamantly opposed to this proposal and especially to the location of the proposed "switching and maintenance" yard as I believe that this yard will totally and permanently destroy the quality of life that we currently enjoy in Manteno.

Yours truly,



Robert J. Ross

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