



Great Lakes Basin Rail Line

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

EI-24046

How Do I Submit Comments?

- **Written Comments:** Complete and submit this form at a public meeting, or mail your comments to the Surface Transportation Board's address at the bottom of this page.
- **Recorded Comments:** Provide your comments to a court reporter at a public meeting.
- **Electronic Comments:** Submit electronic comments by visiting the Surface Transportation Board's website, www.stb.dot.gov, and clicking on the "E-Filing" link and then clicking on "Environmental Comments."

Please refer to Docket No. FD 35952 in all correspondence addressed to the Surface Transportation Board. The comment deadline is June 15, 2016.

Please see attached.

NOTE: When an individual chooses to submit an Environmental Comment or some Other Submissions, his or her personal contact information is considered public information and is shared within and outside of STB without additional authorization.

Cheryl Webster

NAME:

2364 Essington Rd. # 271

ADDRESS:

Joliet, IL 60435

CITY, STATE, ZIP CODE:

PHONE:

E-MAIL:

Comments may be submitted today or mailed to:

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

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Dave Navecky
Surface Transportation Board

ATTN: Docket No. FD 35952
395 E Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20423-0001

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As a resident of Nettle Creek Township in Grundy County, Illinois, I am writing in response to your request for comments regarding the potential impacts of the proposed Great Lakes Basin Rail Line (Docket No. FD 35952). Pioneer Road, on which I own land and live, is a mixture of farms and homes; there are twenty houses plus a small subdivision. The Great Lakes Basin Rail Line has the potential to profoundly impact the rural area in which we live.

As proposed, the Great Lakes Basin Rail Line goes through prime farmland and is inconsistent with the 2014 Grundy County Comprehensive Plan. The Plan recommended supporting agriculture as an economic and cultural priority and limiting development to municipalities and adjacent areas. According to the Grundy County Farm Bureau, minimally 752 acres of farmland would be taken out of production in Grundy County. This does not include the farmland that would be lost to flyovers, crossings, and rail spurs. Furthermore, 104 parcels would be severed, and 74 farms would be landlocked. Additional farmland would become uneconomical or impractical to farm, and it also would be lost. That combined with the suggested rail spurs eventually could result in significant industrial development in areas marked for agriculture.

The Great Lakes Basin Rail Line would have many other negative effects on our community. Up to 110 trains per day would result in significant noise, which will travel miles with very little to block it. Furthermore, the rail line would put residents of both our community and the Chicago area at risk in the event of a hazardous materials release. In his letter to the Surface Transportation Board, John Yonan, P.E., Superintendent of the Cook County Department of Transportation and Highways, wrote "The limited number of First Responders with limited resources from mostly rural communities would be severely challenged to control any hazardous spill. If a hazardous cloud was released, the location of the GLBT and the predominately northeast winds in this region, Cook County and the City of Chicago would be greatly impacted."

Considering the significance of these impacts, the need for this project should be clear, but it isn't. Yonan also wrote "The proposed Great Lakes Basin Rail Line will, at best, only address a very small part of the region's freight congestion." Both Norfolk Southern and Union Pacific have announced that they don't plan to use the Great Lakes Basin Rail Line. Furthermore, there are alternative solutions, notably the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency Program. Therefore, in my opinion, the negative impacts of this project far outweigh the possible benefits.

Sincerely,

Cheryl Webster

Cheryl Webster

Dave Navecky
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