

Dave Navecky-Docket No. FD 35952

Douglas Ruffatti

Surface Transportation Board

6950 S. Woods Rd.

Office of Environmental Analysis

Gardner, IL 60424

395 E. Street SW

June 13, 2016

Washington, DC 20423-0001

Dear Mr. Navecky,

I operate farms in Grundy County, one of which is proposed to have the GLB Railroad pass through it, at MP 101. I have lived or worked on these farms for my whole life, nearly 59 years. The rail line is proposed to pass within a quarter to half mile of where we live. I am opposed to the GLB Railroad Project, referred to as "Docket No. FD 35952 Great Lakes Basin Transportation Corp, LLC Project", and hope to convey my concerns.

The environmental concerns include:

Pollution due to derailments or accidents...Very recently, June 5, 2016, tanker cars carrying highly volatile crude oil derailed in Oregon, resulting in several cars catching fire, oil spilling, evacuations, pollution, and a massive cleanup. If that had occurred here, precious topsoil would be worthless for any use in the foreseeable future and also the environment surrounding it. Nearby farm fields would be constantly affected by it.

Ground water and water stream contamination from spills...Surface water for the rail line project would most likely be diverted to a nearby stream, spills and contaminants would be carried to nearby streams by rain water or by sub surface drainage. Groundwater contamination would render local well water unusable.

Flooding of field due to the flow of surface water being disrupted...If surface water isn't controlled, then there would tend to be flooding or ponding of water within the field, creating other environmental concerns such as mosquitoes, unwanted vegetative growth, and leaving a portion of the field unusable for farming.

Increased flooding due to water management changes...To control flooding, surface water would have to be diverted to a nearby stream, which already tends to flood out of its banks during moderate to heavy rainfall. Flood water from the stream flows into the field. With additional flood water going to the stream, the field would suffer from increased flooding and loss of crop.

Drainage problems from tile damage or tile systems being cut off and disrupted...Clay drainage tile can be crushed by heavy construction equipment without being aware of it, possibly disrupting an entire drainage system. Cutting off tile lines could also disrupt an entire drainage system.

Air and Sound pollution...Inherent with a railroad, the sound and air quality of a high use rail line would have an adverse affect on the environment, which includes the people of the surrounding area. Air

pollution due to fires related to spills of toxic chemicals or due to the chemicals themselves can contaminate crops in the surrounding area or region, making the crops unable to be harvested and living in the vicinity impossible. Fires during the fall when crops are dry can result in vast areas being destroyed by wind driven fire.

All of these environmental concerns could have a devastating effect on the functionality and value of that part of the farm operation and our surrounding farms.

Crossings:

Crossings...A rural area has many side roads that have very little traffic, but the farm community relies on them greatly. There is great concern that some of these roads, that are crossed by the railroad, won't have crossings available or the roads would just be closed off. Farmers would depend on these roads being open and having crossings on them in order to be able to operate. The crossings would have to be safe and large enough for the large equipment found on farms today. It is also a concern for emergency responders to be able to quickly get to remote farm sites or residences.

Field crossings...Crossings within in a field are also a necessity in order for a farm to operate efficiently. These crossings would also need to be safe and large enough for the large farm equipment used now.

Effects on Farm Operation:

Loss of crop revenue...The rail line would take 6 acres out of production from a 40 acre field. The 40 acre field would be severed on an angle, creating two smaller fields, a 21 acre piece and a 12 acre piece. The resulting fields would have end rows planted on an angle along the railroad 200' strip. End rows don't produce as much (about 30% less) due to the extra compaction of turning around on them with equipment during a normal operating season., also resulting in less crop revenue from those end rows, approximately 3.64 acres. End rows require extra seed usage and therefore extra cost due to planting into slanted rows.

Field access...The 21 acre piece would be landlocked, cut off from access. The railroad would have to provide access to that side of the field in order to make it operational, with a crossing that is safe and wide enough for large equipment. Without access, the field would be unusable, not operational.

Added costs and time...Extra costs and time is required to farm two smaller irregular shaped fields rather than one rectangular field. The time spent turning equipment around to make the next pass increases (at least doubles) because the number of times turning equipment around would be doubled, resulting in more time and fuel overall to work the farm.

Travel distance for field work...Without a crossing close by for field access due to road closings or no crossing being installed, the travel distance and time to move equipment to and from a field would increase significantly. It would involve traveling an estimated 767 miles to accomplish the same operations on the farm for a field that now has an entrance less than half a mile away. Working a small piece would be much more difficult and uneconomical.

Value of the farm...The farm value would be drastically reduced by having a railroad cutting through it, and the environmental concerns that are created with it. Cash rent for the farm would be less for the

land owner due to the difficulty of accessing the fields for farm operations, the extra time and distance involved with having to get to crossings that would not be closely available, and the extra time needed to complete field operations for the crop.

No compensation...Compensation to the farm renter has not been considered. Not only is the land owner going to receive less income due to loss of land and the impacts of the rail line severing fields, but the renter would also receive less income.

Is it needed:

Railroad usage...With current rail lines having been abandoned, barely used, or removed, why is this rail line being proposed. In our immediate area, there are rail lines, highways, and canals that have been abandoned, closed, or removed. There must be other similar incidences all along the proposed route of this railroad. Lives, farmland, and farm operations were forced to be given up and destroyed to create those projects..and now they stand idle...never to be restored to what was there, a reminder of what has happened in the past. Great care and responsibility must be used in the consideration of this railroad, knowing that sometime in the future, it could also be abandoned.

Use of existing railroad right-of-ways...There are railroad lines that can be used to accomplish the same goal. Why destroy so many farms and lives along the proposed 278 mile track when alternative existing routes can be used, modified, replaced, or improved.

Eminent Domain:

Eminent domain...should not be granted to private business for the acquisition of land. One business should not be allowed to overtake the assets of another business for their own gain.

Closing Comments:

Farmland is not open space for the taking. It is the essential part of agricultural businesses that have been developed over many years and over the lifetimes of many farm generations, providing those farm generations with a living and a way of life that can't be replaced once it has been destroyed. It is a raw material that cannot be replaced or restored. Farming is big business, it's not about poor people scratching an existence off the land.

Farms and the lives on those farms are part of the environment. Drawing a line on a map, crosses hundreds or perhaps thousands of lives that have been developed and established through the generations of farm families in businesses that are operated in the most efficient means possible to provide a way of life. Changing that operation would cripple and likely destroy many farms.

This railroad is not about growth, but rather the word that comes to mind is greed. What if a major farm operation wanted to start a farming operation in the middle of another big business, such as a big business containing factories, assembly lines, warehouses, trucking facilities, showrooms, etc. The consequences of severing a business, by physically going through it with another would be devastating.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Douglas Ruffatti

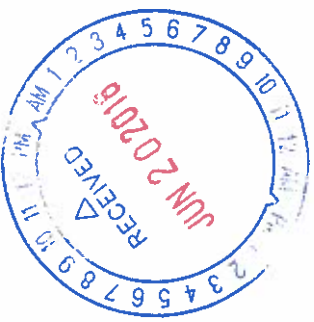
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6/14/2016

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