

July 8, 2016

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

Dear Mr. Navecky:

Regarding the proposed 278 mile Great Plains Basin Rail Line (GPBR) project, I am writing this as both an affected landowner and also as a trustee of an affected fire protection district. First of all, in regards to the safety concerns that the four new rail crossings will have in our district, it should be pointed out that our fire district is primarily supported by volunteer firefighters. When an emergency occurs in our district, the paging system used alerts our volunteers who must travel to the fire station on rural roads. If some are delayed because of having to wait for a train or having to take a longer more timely route to avoid the crossing, the response time could be increased. In the case of a fire, which normally doubles in size every minute it goes unattended, the delay could have serious consequences. We do have a full time paramedic and full time EMT on duty at the fire station, but if the ambulance call is on the other side of the tracks, there could be a deadly delay in our response time.

Pertaining to the farm that I own that is in the path of the proposed rail line, I am 100% against the suggestion that our land be taken from us by another individual because they have a private project that they expect to make huge profits from. I calculated that Frank Patton only expects to pay approximately 1.7% of the total \$8 billion project cost for the 278 mile x 200 foot wide path ($278 \text{ mi} \times 5,280 \text{ ft} \times 200 \text{ ft} = 43,560 \text{ sq. ft.} \times \$20,000/\text{acre} = \$134,788,000 \div \$8 \text{ billion} = 1.68\%$). In my opinion, this is a slap in the face to the victim after the robbery of his property has taken place. If Frank Patton's motive for this rail line is to benefit the country and not fatten his bank account, then I have another option for the GPBR project.

Instead of forcing the landowners to sell their property, which in many cases has been owned by their family for generations, the rail line should lease the property and pay an annual fee based on the rail usage. This way, only a 50 foot wide strip would be initially taken out of crop production, as only two rails would be needed in the majority of the 278 mile length. If in 50 years an additional line is needed, the width could be expanded by 25 feet. This way the land owner will not have his property stolen and the amount of land loss from its original use will be minimized. The free electricity being talked about can be given to homeowners living within one mile of the track, instead of to the affected land owners for the rail line. Regarding the 50 foot utility corridor, that land could also be leased to the utility companies with annual payments going to the landowners. Other utility companies such as those which install communication towers and wind towers lease the land their towers sit on and make annual payments.

Again, I am against the rail line project but if it is felt to be in the best interest of this country, then don't allow our land to be stolen by already rich businessman and allow the landowners to retain control of their property. I also agree with a previous proposal that all road crossings must have an overpass for traffic.

Thank you for reviewing my comments.

Sincerely,



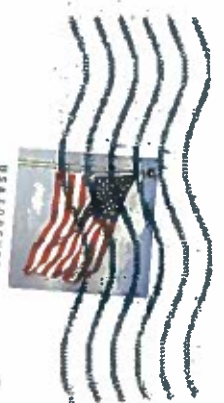
Charles W. Meyers
7302 Montague Road
Rockford, IL 61102

Cc: Winnebago/Boone County Farm Bureau, 1925 S. Meridian Road, Rockford, IL 61102

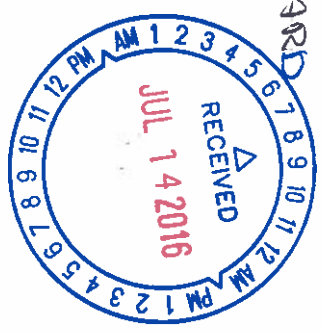
 **Mr. Charles W. Meyers**
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Rockford, IL 61102-4038

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