

July 13, 2016

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

Dear Mr. Navecky,

We are opposed to the Great Lakes Basin Railway (GLB) for the various reasons outlined in this document. The proposed GLB is set to run through what was once known as the Grand Kankakee Marsh aka The Everglades of the North until man came through in the name of progress, began draining it and developed it into highly productive farmland. Our property is located in Porter Township in Porter County and will be approximately one-quarter (1/4) mile from the proposed railway route.

WATER RESOURCES

The construction of railways would impact the drainage of water in the fields. This area was once part of the Grand Kankakee Marsh wetland. It is naturally wet. Man has added drainage tiles to help the flow of the water but there are significant flooding problems that exist. There are several roads in the area that flood on a regular basis so much so that the county has posted semi-permanent signs that say High Water. Examples include 350 West, as well as 400 South in Porter Township, basically in the areas where the proposed train would run. In 2008, our property was flooded so severely due to heavy rains that the entire front yard and driveway were covered in high water that only a pick-up truck could drive through it. This forced us to have an approximately quarter-acre pond dug on our property to help alleviate the flooding. Even the nearby Ludington Ditch/Creek was above its banks and waters flowed freely over 350 West making it unsafe to drive. If the proposed train comes through approximately a quarter mile south of our property, the build-up of ground to hold the train tracks would act as a dam and prohibit water from draining properly. Where will that water go? Will it drain into nearby ponds, roads or flood people's basements?

Local farmers spent thousands of dollars installing a new drainage system in fields on 400 South in Porter Township in Spring 2016. Proposed GLB line would go right through this farmland destroying drainage system and disrupting the drainage of the local area. Photos included.

2008 Pre-Pond

Ground is low elevation



2008 Pre-Pond

Flooding

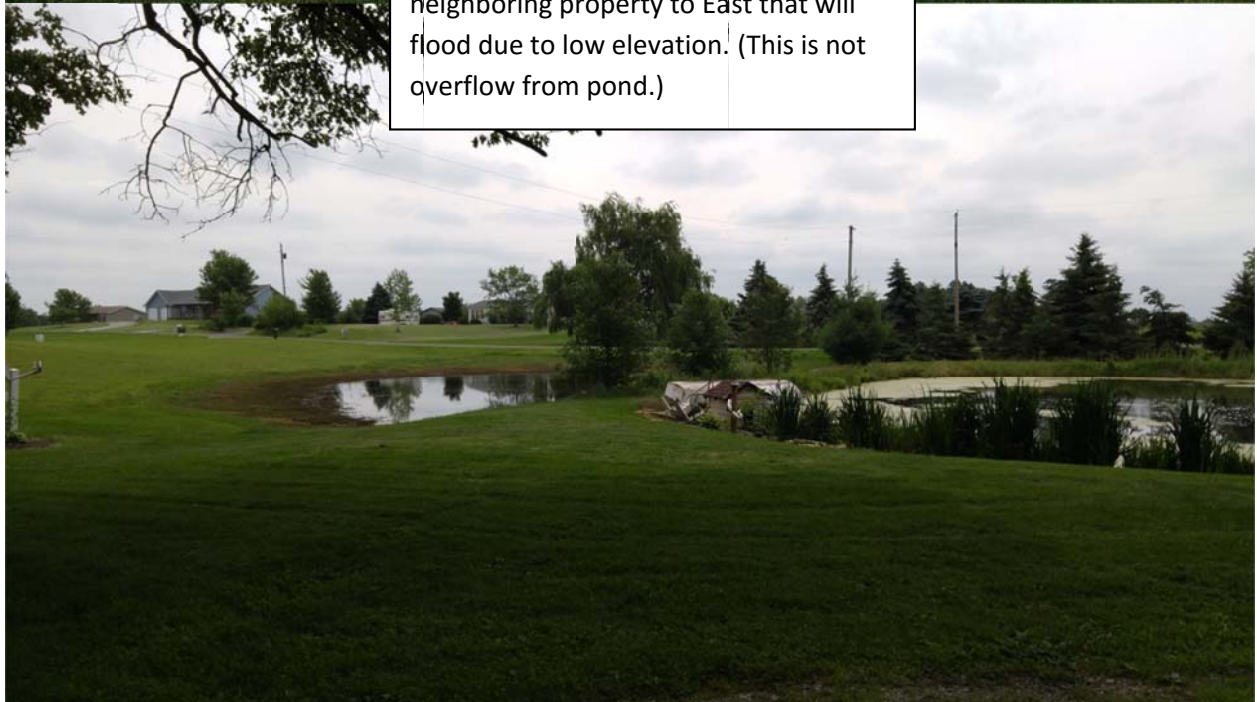


Property as it sits today with pond.





Even with pond, flooding still occurs when there is significant rainfall. Water overflows the banks. 2nd Photo shows neighboring property to East that will flood due to low elevation. (This is not overflow from pond.)





Drainage system installed on 400 South, Spring 2016 by Peterson Farms.



The drainage in Porter County is such a significant problem that the county recently created the Porter County Department of Development and Storm Water Management. Its' Mission is to coordinate the storm water activities to improve water quality, reduce flood damages and restore and enhance the natural drainage system. End Goal: CLEAN WATER FOR EVERYONE! With the creation of this new department, property owners in unincorporated rural areas of the county are charged a new \$120 storm

water fee for each parcel of land owned starting with the tax bills that were due in 2016. More information is available at <http://in-portercounty.civicplus.com/index.aspx?NID=970>. Please visit this site and go to the Projects section to see the current projects in progress.

Where the proposed route intersects with 350 West in Porter Township in Porter County, the area to the south of the rail line is visibly wet with standing water on the map provided by GLB. Standing water is visible on northwest and southwest corners of 350 West as the water drains to those areas and then drains underneath the county road to the southwest corner with the elevated railroad tracks the water that is currently draining to the south will not have anywhere to drain to and will cause flooding problems to the north of the railroad tracks. Our house is about a quarter mile to the north and experiences current flooding problems. The railroad will just exacerbate the flooding problems. 350 West already floods over the roadway and many times a High Water signs are placed on site and are there for months at a time. The railroad would serve as a dam where the water flows, blocking the path of the water drainage potentially causing flooding of unknown consequences. This could cause flooding of the roadway, which is a vital route to and from Boone Grove Volunteer Fire Department and Boone Grove Middle School.

The construction of a 278-mile rail line running up to 110 trains a day would absolutely be devastating to the people, animals, communities and natural resources along the line. The decision of allowing the GLB to construct this giant railway would be a mistake that would be nearly impossible to undo. Decisions from more than a century ago forever changed the land; let's not go down the same path again.

Sincerely,

Miranda & Richard Serletic

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