

June 14, 2016

Attention Dave Navecky and Surface Transportation Board:

STB Docket No. FD 35952

I am writing in opposition of the proposed GLB railway and would like you to consider the following impacts this proposal will have on my life and my extended family.

I am the fourth generation from my family to livestock farm in Rock County. 3 of my siblings also are livestock and/or dairy farmers and my eldest sister is a grain broker and owns a landscape and nursery business. My parent's farm was a century farm in 1983 and on the passing of my father this past year my mother has created a Waite Family Farm Trust so that future generations can also have an opportunity to carry on the traditions of our family. I am fortunate to own and farm land that my ancestors farmed on for over 100 years. Several of my nieces and nephews are currently farming in our township. Most of my siblings and their children have college degrees and/or advanced education in agriculture but all have chosen to support and be part of the farming tradition and live in rural communities. Our family, like most farm families has been willing to financially sacrifice material luxuries in order to protect our land, raise our livestock in the best conditions and provide quality food that our country uses to support America's global economy.

The GLB proposed rail with 200 foot easement pirates our family's tradition. We are livestock producers that have set up pastures and fences to efficiently manage all of our land and livestock manure. The amount of livestock we can raise is determined by our state and township zoning laws based off of the acreage we farm. The 200 ft. right away robs us of some of our livestock land units and earning potential. The livestock barns and pastures on my farm and my mother's farm will have to be moved because of noise, vibration and drainage issues created by the proposed rail. I am concerned that the fertility of my breeding stock and the efficiency of weight gain will be adversely affected by the constant disruption of the train noise, vibration and pollution. It has taken years to develop a private market for the sale of my animals and to select the genetics that will efficiently breed out of season, successfully raise their young and reach market weight in 7 weeks. I fear I will lose my market because I will have less product to sell if fertility and gain is negatively impacted.

The 200 foot easement creates slices of land that will be unusable and unsafe for livestock grazing and create unmanaged corridors for livestock predators and disease carriers to run along and have access to other areas. I will have to re-fence my fields that are set up for rotational grazing to accommodate the division created by the proposed rail right away. I will have to maintain the fences keeping my livestock off of the railway and manage the weeds that will thrive along the railway and spread to my fields. I have followed a crop rotation plan and established permanent pastures to protect soil quality and water runoff for over 25 years. The proposed rail right away will change the flow of water and invalidate my soil conservation plan and nutrient management plan. I will have to incur the cost of developing new plans, new fences, and new barnyard buildings as well as suffer the loss of income from unusable land and potential loss of livestock and efficiency of production. If a derailment or spill occurs how and who will pay to evacuate and protect my livestock?

I live on a rural road in between a town line road and another country road. Only one other family with 3 retired members live on my road. The proposed rail closes the town line end of my road. Our safety is severely compromised with the road becoming a dead end. Our first responders will have use the other road to reach us. In the winter time the snow drifts and makes the north end of the road very difficult to keep open. Our township is responsible for the plowing and maintenance of the roads. The increased time and inefficiency to maintain the dead end road as well as all of the other rail crossings in our town with this proposal is an unfair burden to all of our town taxpayers.

Rock County has many rural school bus routes. I am very concerned about the safety of our children going to school in the county having to cross the rail lines. The division of fields created by the proposal also will create more safety hazards as farm implements slow traffic on more roads to get to split fields and have to cross rail lines with high speed rail. The proposed rail is less than half a mile from an I43 intersection which is the alternate route of I90. The potential for accidents on the highway rail crossing especially with extra traffic from the alternate route is greatly increased.

I am also concerned about the air pollution and potential water pollution this proposal will create in our county. My asthma will be negatively impacted by the increase in air pollution created by the proposed rail. The proposed route curves thru the top of the gravel knolls on our family's farms. The 1 percent grade needed for this proposal makes the current topography of the land not feasible for the rail. The drainage and construction of a rail going over the top of the hills would cause severe erosion and destroy farm land miles away from the hills to create the grade. There are 3 active gravel pits operating within 1 mile of the proposed rail in my township. Water runoff and field drainage into the pits will increase with the creation of the railway bed. 2 of the pits are already pumping water out of the pits to be able to harvest gravel. Their pumped water ends up into the Turtle Creek watershed. The gravel pit on my road pumps water thru a tile line that empties into a stream flowing thru my mother's farm. If a derailment or hazard waste spill occurs not only will well water in our township be contaminated but the natural drainage of our land will cause the pollution of the water in the gravel pits and Turtle Creek watershed. Turtle Creek flows into the Rock River which flows thru the cities of Beloit and Janesville. The impact of a spill could adversely impact the safety of the population of our entire county. If the gravel knolls are cut to reduce the grade, the erosion and water flow will create additional drainage problems with the springs and streams running thru our land. New waterways and tile lines will have to be established at our expense. Will the gravel on our farms become another source of income for a group of private investors that use eminent domain to take our land and create erosion problems for the rest of our land?

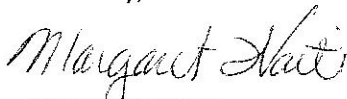
A Turtle Creek Wildlife Area has been established on 1000 acres in Walworth County and Eastern Rock County by our Dept. of Natural Resources. Rare fish, natural plantings and increased wildlife and flyway birds have benefited from this project on the acreage. Wildlife along the Turtle Creek land not in this area has also increased because of this managed area. The proposed rail jeopardizes the efforts of our State to improve the wildlife, natural plantings, and water quality in the Turtle Creek Watershed. As population grows the importance of green corridors to counterbalance water, noise and air pollution is critical to the health and safety of all people. Green corridors protect water and air quality. Managed cropland with planted waterways provides cover and feed for wildlife. The proposed rail disregards the positive impact farmland and wildlife corridors have on safety and health of people as it uses rural America as thoroughfare for private profit.

Wisconsin has always recognized the importance of agriculture for our state. We have strong farmland preservation programs and have developed smart growth plans that allow for state and local control of economic development and protection of our natural resources in rural areas. This effort is made to protect our state and local municipalities from being burdened with growth, urban sprawl and abandonment of properties that the tax base cannot support and to protect agriculture and our natural resources. The inconsistencies in the GLB proposal along with the process that doesn't call for a definitive plan or disclosure of finances creates a serious threat to the economic stability of rural America and the people who have chosen to live in rural America. Corporate land grabs do not benefit taxpaying citizens or protect natural resources.

Patton's proposal and his numerous interviews have shown a complete disregard for rural America. He calls us "recalcitrant citizens", "isolationists", and our land "green wasteland". American farmers and rural people are a minority and our rights should also be respected and protected! We have multi-generational traditions of protecting the land and natural resources; we have a critical role in producing quality food for the world and balancing our trade with other countries; we are educated; we are involved in our communities and we are proud of our heritage, culture, traditions, and self-employed agribusinesses! American Agriculture has protected our natural resources, provided economic stability for our country and hope and opportunity for our youth!

The GLB proposal by private investors to take farmland, destroy rural traditions and values, and disregard the rights of the rural minority should not be allowed!

Sincerely,



Margaret Waite

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