

Gardner Fire Protection District

P.O. Box 181
Gardner, IL 60424-0181

(815) 237-8806
(815) 237-0066 Fax

Mike Pasternak
Todd Perkins
Keith Howland
Becky Pasternak

Trustee/President
Trustee/Secretary
Trustee/Treasurer
Asst. Dist. Secretary

June 8, 2016

Mr. Dave Navecky
Surface Transportation Board
395 E. Street SW
Washington, DC 35952
Docket NO FD 35952

RE: Docket No. FD 35952

Dear Mr. Navecky

The Gardner Fire Protection District [hereafter referred to as GFPD] would like you to consider some issues in regards to the Great Lakes Basin Railroad [hereafter referred to as GLBR] and why this project would not be in the best interest of GFPD residents.

Mr. Patton keeps referring to the jobs that will be created with GLBR; yes, construction jobs will be created. But what about the long term effects afterward.

GFPD is a small district, which severely limits the ability to increase our property tax revenue. At this time with present tax monies available the district is able to provide residents within our district EMS and fire protection service. However the concern is where additional funds for hazardous material training, additional equipment, & money to pay the additional manpower to operate new equipment come from if the GLBR is granted the authority to construct their railroad? Does Mr. Patton expect the residents of the GFPD to be responsible for these increases? The taxpayers aren't the ones creating this issue so asking them to be responsible for this expense is not only unfair but unjust.

While the amount of GLBR traffic is estimated, delays in responding to district residents on the West and South sides of the district could become a life threatening issue. According to the proposed map it appears the rail line will cut across 9 roads possibly in our district increasing our response time by 8 to 16 minutes. Then there is the matter of getting to the hospital. GFPD has limited routes to the hospital and already has to deal with the double BNSF Rail (Rte. 47 in Mazon) blocking our fastest route to the nearest hospital sometimes adding up to 8 minutes per train or more if another train is traveling on the 2nd track. The current proposed route for the GLBR would add two more crossings (Gardner Rd. & Rte. 47) coming out of Gardner giving the possibility of adding 8 to 16 minutes or more. That means a real possibility of over a half an hour waiting for trains. In our business seconds save lives...so 30 minutes is totally unacceptable.

Then there is the matter of the crossings themselves. Will there be crossings at every road crossed? This again will increase our response time if roads are cut off. Will there be gates at all crossings? This is a must from our stand point as again the safety of our residents is of the utmost importance and if not it's just one more thing that will increase our work load and cost from accidents that would be incurred from non-gated crossings.

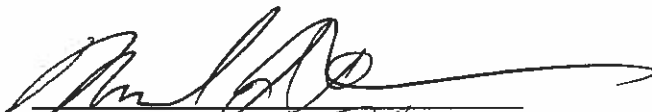
Another issue for concern is that the area from Essex to Mazon was a major coal mining area leaving abandoned mine shafts scattered across the area. Insurance companies require mine subsidence coverage on homeowner insurance policies; this is a major concern adding two tracks with 110 trains a day carrying oil or other hazardous materials possibly collapsing into an old mine shaft.

Lastly, the GLBR is cutting through prime farm land. Our concern is the land will lose its tax value severely reducing our districts tax revenue, which is already very limited. Providing quality services is of the utmost importance to us and changing the tax rate or eliminating some of our rural residents will severely impact our operating funds.

In closing Mr. Navecky, GFPD would like you to take a serious look at the impact GLBR will have from Indiana to Wisconsin. GFPD isn't the only small district concerned with the ability to provide EMS and fire services to their residents. When someone needs an ambulance or fire engine minutes can make a difference.

Sincerely,

Gardner Fire Protection District Board


Mike Pasternak, Trustee
Todd Perkins, Trustee
Keith Howland, Trustee

Gardner Fire Protection Dist.
P O Box 181
Gardner, IL 61

DAVE NAVECKY
SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
395 E STREET SW
WASHINGTON DC 20423-0001
DOCKET NO FD 35952

20423-0012



U.S. MAIL PERMIT NO. 1004
GARDNER, IL 61
NO JUN 20 2016 PM 5 11

