

In The Matter Of:
*Public Scoping Meeting For The EIS On The
Great Lakes Basin Rail Line*

*Wanatah, IN
April 13, 2016*

*Midwest Reporting, Inc.
1448 Lincoln Way East
South Bend, Indiana 46613*

PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING FOR THE EIS ON THE
GREAT LAKES BASIN RAIL LINE

Date: Wednesday, April 13, 2016
Time: 6:00 p.m.
Place: American Legion Banquet Hall
203 South Washington Street
Wanatah, Indiana 46390

The proceedings of the above-mentioned and
foregoing matter taken pursuant to notice as to
the time and place.

Before Kristin J. Nichols, CSR, RPR
Notary Public, Porter County, Indiana

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1 APPEARANCES:

- 2
- 3
- 4 Mr. Dave Navecky, Surface Transportation Board
- 5 Ms. Phillis Johnson-Ball, Surface Transportation Board
- 6 Mr. Alan Summerville, ICF International
- 7 Ms. Laura Ziemke, ICF International
- 8 Ms. Tiffany Mendoza, ICF International
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1 MS. ZIEMKE: May I have your attention, please?
2 Ladies and gentlemen. Ladies and gentlemen, may I have
3 your attention? Great. All right.

4 Thank you, everyone, for coming this evening.
5 This is a scoping meeting for the Great Lakes Basin Rail
6 Environmental Impact Statement.

7 The first thing I'd like to ask is if everyone
8 could please turn off your cell phones. And I'd also
9 like to point out that if we have anyone who needs to sit
10 down we do have three or four chairs up front here. So
11 if you could make your way up front you could have a seat
12 here in the front.

13 So tonight's meeting is going to be in two parts.
14 The first part will be a presentation. And the second
15 part will be an oral comment period. And I'll give you
16 the guidelines for the oral comment period after the
17 presentation.

18 So at this time I'd like to introduce Dave
19 Navecky.

20 MR. NAVECKY: Good evening, folks. My name is
21 Dave Navecky with the Surface Transportation Board. I'm
22 in the agency's Office of Environmental Analysis. And
23 we're the folks that are going to be preparing the
24 Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed rail
25 line. And I'd like to thank you for coming tonight.

1 This is our fourth meeting. And each meeting
2 we're surprised at how many of you are showing up. And
3 we're glad you're hear. The purpose of these meetings
4 are to get your input on the project and solicit comments
5 from you folks, what your concerns are, what your issues
6 are. And that's why we're here. So I'm glad we have
7 such a great turnout this evening.

8 Again this is the public scoping meeting for the
9 Environmental Impact Statement on the Great Lakes Basin
10 Rail Line.

11 Next slide, please. Can everybody hear me okay in
12 back?

13 (Audience Responds.)

14 MR. NAVECKY: Thank you. For the agenda for this
15 presentation we'll do a few introductions. We'll provide
16 an overview of the Surface Transportation Board and our
17 Environmental Impact Statement process. We'll provide an
18 overview of the purpose and need of the proposed project
19 and a description of what's being proposed. And we'll go
20 over some resources that are available to you on the
21 Internet to help you participate in the project, in the
22 process, and that also provide a number of resources for
23 you.

24 Next slide, please. Introductions. Again I'm
25 Dave Navecky. I'm the Project Lead for the Surface

1 Transportation Board for this Environmental Impact
2 Statement. We also have here this evening Phillis
3 Johnson-Ball with the Surface Transportation Board.
4 She's the Deputy Director for the Office of Environmental
5 Analysis. And we also have here this evening eight folks
6 from ICF International. It's a consulting firm that's
7 helping us prepare this Environmental Impact Statement.

8 It's going to be a large, detailed study. And
9 it's just, we don't have the staff to cover a project of
10 this magnitude internally. Or, if we did, it would take
11 us many years to get it done. So at the table we have
12 ICF's project manager, on their side, helping us. That's
13 Alan Summerville on the far right, your left, of the
14 table. And there are seven other ICF folks here this
15 evening. They also have the similar name tags.

16 Next slide, please. Surface Transportation Board.
17 Who we are. The Surface Transportation Board sometimes
18 people may refer to us as the Board or the STB. We're a
19 small federal agency located in Washington, DC. Small
20 meaning we're about 150 people. We have responsibility
21 and oversight -- or responsibility for granting authority
22 for the construction and operation of new rail lines in
23 the United States.

24 When a proposal comes to us we consider, our
25 review goes down two avenues when we look at the project.

1 One is the environmental review process. And that's what
2 I'm responsible for. That's why we're here this evening
3 is to get your input on the environmental review process.

4 And the other avenue that's looked at is the
5 transportation merits of the proposed project. That's
6 done by a separate group of folks within our agency
7 looking at the legal and economic factors of the
8 proposal. I'm not qualified to do that, but I think I'm
9 qualified to do the environmental work.

10 The transportation merits and the environmental
11 review processes don't necessarily start at the same
12 time, which is in this case they got not started at the
13 same time. The transportation merits review will be
14 initiated when the Great Lakes Basin folks formally
15 submit their request for authority to construct and
16 operate the rail line.

17 The reason we start the environmental review
18 process early is because that's the long pole in the
19 tent. This process is going to take us at least two or
20 three years to go through. It doesn't take as long for
21 the other folks in my agency to review the transportation
22 merits. So we jump start the environmental review
23 process so that the two processes end about the same
24 time.

25 After we complete those reviews on the

1 transportation merits and the environmental issues, the
2 Board, our agency, will issue a final decision that
3 either denies, approves, or approves with conditions the
4 proposed rail line.

5 The agency is currently made up of three Board
6 members which are, who are nominated by the president and
7 confirmed by the Senate. We were recently authorized to
8 increase to five Board members. Those positions remain
9 vacant. There have been no nominations yet.

10 When the time comes for a decision to be made, and
11 that's going to be several years from now after we've
12 completed the environmental review process, the Board
13 considers, as I mentioned, the transportation merits and
14 the environmental issues. And the members literally vote
15 on the issue. And the majority vote carries the
16 decision.

17 So in this case if we continue to have three
18 members it will be two members to either approve the
19 project and two members to deny the project.

20 Next slide, please. Scoping process. The
21 environmental review process that we're under begins with
22 scoping. Scoping means is we are trying to understand
23 what the scope of our document should be. And an
24 important component of that scoping process is for us to
25 come out to you folks and talk with you and hear from you

1 on what the issues are that we should study in our
2 Environmental Impact Statement.

3 It's important to us because you're the folks that
4 have a better understanding of what the issues are. I
5 obviously don't live here. I'm from Washington, DC. But
6 you folks are the ones that can help educate us on what
7 the issues are and what the potential impacts could be
8 from this project. So we can take those and we can study
9 them appropriately in our environmental review process.

10 And we've already gotten, this is our fourth
11 meeting out of ten, and we're getting a lot of good
12 information from you folks related to impacts to farming
13 operations that would be obstructed by the proposed rail
14 line and related to farming, it also impacts the drainage
15 tiles, noise impacts, concerns with schools, concerns
16 about the fire and emergency vehicle response times from
17 blocked road crossings.

18 And so we welcome all your comments. All your
19 comments are important to us. And we ask when you
20 provide us comments, and you don't need to do it tonight.
21 You can provide it to us later. We ask that you provide
22 us with as specific comments as possible to help us
23 understand what the issues are so that we can better
24 address them in our environmental review study.

25 And I understand a lot of you do not support this

1 project, but it will be helpful for us to understand why
2 so we can address those concerns and flush out those
3 impacts in our study so they are properly disclosed. So
4 you tell us what specifically are your concerns about the
5 railroad so we can look into them in our environmental
6 review process.

7 Also during scoping we've reached out to federal,
8 state and local agencies, to school districts, to
9 chambers of commerce, police departments, any other
10 potential interested parties. We've tried to reach out
11 to as many folks as we can.

12 In addition to your comments on potential impacts
13 we're also interested in hearing any suggestions you may
14 have on alternative routes for the proposed rail line.
15 If you think there's a better location for it, a better
16 route that would avoid the impacts or issues that you're
17 concerned about personally, we'd like to hear about that.

18 And if it helps you to get that across to us, feel
19 free to get on a computer and print out a map and draw a
20 line on the map. And include that in your comments you
21 provide us. That will be very useful to us.

22 We're also interested in hearing what you may have
23 on potential mitigation. If this project is to move
24 forward, if it were approved and there's an impact you're
25 concerned about, how do you think it could be mitigated

1 to reduce those impacts, to minimize the impacts, to
2 avoid the impacts. We'd like to hear any suggestions
3 that you might have.

4 We're going to take all those comments we get from
5 you folks as well as from other people that mailed them
6 in to us or filed them through our website, we'll take
7 all those comments and we're going to finalize the scope
8 of study for our Environmental Impact Statement.

9 We're also going to use those suggestions on
10 alternatives as well as we're going to dig into it
11 ourselves as an agency and a team and identify potential
12 alternatives for the proposed rail line. And we'll
13 identify that final scope of study for the document and
14 the alternatives that we're going to be studying in the
15 document. Those will all be identified in what we refer
16 to as a final scope of study.

17 And everyone that has requested to be notified
18 about what's going on with this project either by e-mail
19 or by mail, you will be notified when that final scope of
20 study has been issued. So if you want to be notified I
21 encourage you to fill out the cards in the back or you
22 can go to our project website and sign up to be added to
23 our notification list. And we'll show you more about
24 that later.

25 Next slide, please. So after we complete the

1 final scope of study we'll start working on the draft
2 Environmental Impact Statement. There will be a little
3 more work we need to do. There will be a lot of data we
4 need to collect from federal, state and local agencies.
5 There's going to be modeling that we're going to need to do.
6 We're going to need to do modeling, for example, on noise
7 impacts to the residents, homes, schools, other sets of
8 resources near the proposed rail line. We're going to
9 have to do fieldwork to collect data.

10 All that information will help us identify what
11 the potential impacts of this proposed rail line could
12 be. And that analysis of potential impacts will be
13 completed for all the alternatives that we identified in
14 our final scope of study.

15 It will not be just done for the alternative or
16 the route that has been proposed by the Great Lakes Basin
17 folks, but we will do an equally in-depth review of the
18 alternatives that we identify for the draft EIS. And
19 we'll also look at the impacts of the no action
20 alternative. The no action being there's no rail line
21 built.

22 So all the field alternatives and no action
23 alternatives are treated equally in our document. We
24 don't give any preference to the route that's been
25 proposed by the Great Lakes Basin folks.

1 We will also identify the preliminary mitigation
2 that we think would be appropriate to mitigate the
3 impacts we've identified. And we'll be using your
4 scoping comments that you provide us on potential
5 mitigation to aid us in identifying what those
6 mitigations might be. And we'll pull all that together
7 and we'll issue a draft Environmental Impact Statement.
8 It's going to be a lengthy document because we have a lot
9 of ground to cover. It's a large project and there are
10 many issues for us to address.

11 Again, if you are on our notification list, you
12 will receive notification by e-mail or by mail, whichever
13 you expressed a preference for and will be told or
14 informed that the draft Environmental Impact Statement is
15 available. That will be available up on the Internet
16 someplace in the clouds. Where it actually happens, I
17 don't know.

18 It will be a large document. Hundreds of pages
19 long if you were to print it out. And that will be, that
20 draft EIS, will be available for you to review and
21 comment on. I'm not sure what the comment period will be
22 at this point as far as duration. We hope to give you
23 plenty of time to look in that document and provide us
24 comments on the document.

25 Also during that comment period we will be back

1 out here to hear from you folks directly. We will have
2 another meeting such as this one. And you will have an
3 opportunity again to come up to the microphone and write
4 your comments on what the conclusions are on the draft
5 EIS. If you have any disagreements with what the impacts
6 were that we've identified, the potential impacts, if you
7 think the mitigation we proposed doesn't go far enough,
8 we'd like to hear from you on that as well.

9 Next slide, please. So at the end of the comment
10 period on the draft EIS we will have all those comments,
11 and I'm expecting we'll get hundreds, if not thousands of
12 comments. We'll take all those comments and decide what
13 we need to do next.

14 What I mean by that is we will need to address all
15 those comments in our final EIS. And some of the
16 comments might be just a simple written reply in the
17 final EIS. Perhaps clarifying an issue that wasn't clear
18 enough in the draft EIS. Perhaps there was a discussion
19 in the draft EIS you couldn't find because it's a large
20 document and it might have been the information you were
21 looking for was buried in one of the appendices. So
22 we'll direct you where to find that.

23 Some of your comments might require us to do some
24 additional modeling. Some of your comments might require
25 us to do some additional fieldwork in order to address

1 them properly. So we'll do that work, whatever is needed
2 to address the comments that we receive on the draft EIS.
3 Then we will issue a final EIS. And again you will be
4 notified when that document has been issued.

5 In the final EIS, the office I work in at the
6 Surface Transportation Board, the Office of Environmental
7 Analysis will have some recommendations. Those
8 recommendations are geared towards our Board members.
9 The Board members that will vote on this project
10 eventually.

11 The recommendations will include a preferred
12 alternative based on the environmental impacts, the
13 alternative that we recommend that they accept, if they
14 decide to approve this project, we recommend that they
15 adopt this preferred alternative based on the
16 environmental issues that we've identified.

17 We also have a lengthy list of mitigation measures
18 by that time. And our recommendation will be that they
19 enclose that entire list of mitigation measures if they
20 choose to approve the project.

21 So the Board, at that point the Board will be
22 ready to make what we refer to as a final decision. And
23 they will consider the transportation merits of the
24 project. And again those transportation merits will at
25 that time have been reviewed and evaluated by other folks

1 within our agency.

2 And they will review what we refer to as the
3 entire environmental record. That's the draft EIS, your
4 comments, all the comments, your comments and all the
5 other comments in the draft EIS, and the content of the
6 final EIS including our recommendations on the preferred
7 alternative and the mitigation measures if they choose to
8 approve the project.

9 And again they basically have three options. They
10 can deny the project. They can approve the project. Or
11 they can approve the project with the mitigation we
12 recommend. At that point there will be other federal
13 agencies that need to make decisions.

14 We know that the Corps of Engineers will need to
15 make a decision related to the potential wetland impacts
16 from the project. And another agency, the U.S. Coast
17 Guard, will need to issue a decision related to the
18 bridge crossings of the major rivers along the route.

19 And these agencies we refer to as cooperating
20 agencies. They typically wait to issue their decisions
21 until the lead agency, that's referring to us in this
22 case, we're the lead agency preparing the Environmental
23 Impact Statement. They typically wait until we've made
24 our final decision. And if the Board members end up
25 approving the project then they will follow making their

1 decision after we've made ours.

2 Next slide, please. Next I'll talk about the
3 applicant's purpose and need. We label this as
4 applicant's purpose and need because the Surface
5 Transportation Board is a licensing agency. Railroads
6 come to us with proposals to construct and operate a rail
7 line. And we need to go through our environmental review
8 and transportation merits reviews to determine whether or
9 not to approve them.

10 This is not our project. We didn't come up with
11 the idea. We didn't come up with a need for the project.
12 We're not funding the project. It's entirely coming from
13 the Great Lakes Basin Transportation folks. So the
14 purpose and need for this project is defined by the
15 applicant. Not to say that we don't consider that in the
16 process that the purpose won't be considered during the
17 transportation merits view side of the process, but it's
18 not reviewed in the environmental review process. It's
19 not considered under transportation merits by other folks
20 within our agency.

21 So according to the Great Lakes Basin
22 Transportation folks, they've provided us with two key
23 points for the purpose and need for the proposed rail
24 line. One is to provide the six Class I railroads in
25 the Chicago area with a bypass of the currently congested

1 Chicago rail network.

2 The Class I's are the largest railroads in the
3 United States based on revenue. That's how they're
4 defined as Class I. There is a revenue threshold. So
5 the Class I's are the large railroads like Union Pacific,
6 NSF Railway, CSX, Norfolk Southern. Those are
7 representing the Class I railroads.

8 The Great Lakes folks also state that the proposed
9 rail line would add capacity to the regional network to
10 accommodate existing and future rail traffic growth
11 within the greater Chicago area.

12 Next slide, please. The proposed action.
13 Proposed action basically is a description of what the,
14 description of the project as proposed by the Great Lakes
15 folks. What they propose is a route you've all seen in
16 the map that's about 278 miles long. It would consist of
17 mostly double track. There would be two tracks. But in
18 the ends, for example up in portions of northwest Indiana
19 and also into southern Wisconsin there would be less
20 traffic. So it would be single track.

21 Apparently what they anticipate is that the larger
22 number of trains would be towards the center of the
23 proposed rail line because there are many interchanges
24 that they're proposing with the Class I's. And so there
25 will be less traffic entering the lines from the ends and

1 there would be more traffic entering the proposed rail
2 line towards the center. So there would be more trains
3 in the center, fewer trains at the ends.

4 So they only proposed single track in the ends.
5 In the center it would be two tracks, except in the
6 vicinity of Manteno they proposed a rail yard or rail
7 terminal where they can provide switching and also
8 servicing of the rail cars and locomotives, maintenance
9 and servicing of the rail cars. That would be triple
10 track is how they have it proposed. Again the proposed
11 rail line extends from, the proposed rail line extends
12 from northwest Indiana, would run through Illinois and
13 extend up into southern Wisconsin.

14 Next slide, please. And probably you all have
15 seen this map or will see it soon. It's on the back of
16 your brochure or it's in your brochure. The rail line
17 again extends from northwest Indiana, down through
18 Illinois, up into southern Wisconsin.

19 Next slide, please. So next I wanted to go over
20 some Internet resources we have available for you to
21 facilitate your participation in our process, to help you
22 participate in the process, to help you get information
23 about the project and help you understand about what's
24 going on.

25 What we have here is the home page of my agency's

1 website. The address is in the brochure that was
2 available to you at the front door. It's
3 www.stb.dot.gov. And on here there's a location up on
4 the top, I'm sure you can't read it, but there's a dark
5 blue bar at the top. In there's a number of buttons
6 within that blue bar.

7 The button on the far left is labeled e-filing.
8 You would put your cursor over that button, you get a
9 dropdown menu that says e-filing. You click on that.
10 The next page you will see on the right-hand side the
11 terms Environmental Comments. You click on that. And it
12 opens up a form for you to electronically file your
13 comments with our agency. At a minimum we ask that you
14 provide your name. If you want to provide your address,
15 that's fine.

16 And there's a text box in which you can provide
17 your comments and actually type your comments right into
18 that text box. But there's a character limit on how many
19 characters you can enter in that box. And based on the
20 comments we have been receiving so far that text box is
21 not going to be large enough for most of you folks.

22 But you can add attachments at the same location.
23 You can fill in the text box if you like, but you can add
24 attachments. You can add a Word document. You can add a
25 pdf file. You can add jpeg files if you have a picture

1 of some resources of concern to you or a field that has
2 drainage tile that would be affected by the proposed rail
3 line. You are welcome to provide any of those type of
4 files and attach them and hit the send button. And off
5 it goes.

6 Another item we have on here towards the middle
7 there's another button called environmental matters.
8 That's all information related to the office I work in,
9 the Office of Environmental Analysis.

10 There are a number of resources in there, but the
11 one you might be most interested in, you get a dropdown
12 menu again. You put your cursor over a button called
13 Environmental Correspondence. You click on that. And
14 that will take you to a portion of our web page where we
15 maintain all the correspondence that you can search by
16 the docket number. That's basically our project number
17 for this proposed rail line. That's the number you will
18 see in all our documents FD35952. It's basically a
19 project number that allows us to track everything going
20 on with this project.

21 You can search by that document number and you can
22 search for all the incoming correspondence that we've
23 gotten on this project. So if you want to see what your
24 neighbors are commenting on so you can get an idea of
25 anything that might even be useful to help you identify

1 what your concerns are hearing what other people are
2 saying, if you want to see what your state agencies are
3 commenting on about this project, you can go in and see
4 what they are saying about the project, or federal
5 agencies, you can look in there.

6 You can also do outgoing correspondence. So
7 that's correspondence that's coming from us. Much of it
8 will be going towards the applicant. So if we're going
9 to need additional information from the Great Lakes Basin
10 folks as we get into this process, we're going to need
11 them to more clearly define train traffic numbers for us
12 and there's a bunch of other information we're going to
13 need from them to enable to us do this Environmental
14 Impact Statement.

15 So those letters from us going to the Great Lakes
16 Basin folks will be in there for you to see what we're
17 asking for. And when they reply to us those replies are
18 also put in there. They would be in the income portion
19 of the website. So you can see what information they are
20 providing to us during the environmental review process.

21 Next slide, please. Because of the size of this
22 project and how much information we need to convey we
23 established a project website. And I don't want you to
24 get it confused with the applicant's website. This is
25 ours. It's called GreatLakesBasinRailEIS.com.

1 The address again is provided on the brochure that
2 was available at the front door. There's a bunch of
3 information on here you might find useful. We provide
4 some information, project background. We provide an
5 overview of our environmental review process similar to
6 what I provided you here this evening.

7 We have a public involvement page that provides a
8 schedule of all our public meetings we are having this
9 week and next week. It also talks about an on-line
10 public scoping meeting that we're having actually two
11 weeks from today. It's an on-line meeting/webinar. It's
12 for those if you have neighbors or friends or relatives
13 that weren't able to come this evening or can't come to
14 any of the meetings. They can participate on-line. I'll
15 go through the same presentation for them during the
16 on-line meeting. And it will also be open for comments
17 where we will cyberly pass around the microphone to
18 people that wanted to provide comments. And everybody
19 that's logged into the webinar will be able to hear what
20 other people are saying and what their comments are.

21 We have a map, a page on maps. And I think
22 there's some good stuff in there. The maps that we have
23 available on the tables in the back, those will be
24 available for you to look at on that page.

25 We also have a file that's called a KMZ file on

1 that page. If you are familiar with Google Earth it's a
2 free software program you can download. We have
3 instructions there on how to download that program. You
4 click on the KMZ file and it opens up into Google Earth.

5 And you can go anywhere on the proposed rail line
6 route, shows up automatically and you can zoom in to
7 great detail. You can go down and find your house and
8 find your farm and see where it would cross your farm or
9 near your home or near a school, whatever resource you
10 are concerned about.

11 Project mail. This is where you can go to the
12 project website and sign up to get on our mailing list.
13 We have a strong preference that you sign up by e-mail.
14 We're going to have hundreds of people that want to be
15 notified. And it's going to be much easier for us to
16 notify you by e-mail.

17 But if you don't have a computer -- or I guess if
18 you don't have a computer you can't get on here to sign
19 up for the mailing list. But you can sign up somebody
20 else if they don't have a computer. If you have
21 neighbors that don't have a computer, like my parents
22 don't have a computer, you can sign them up with their
23 regular street address. So they would get notification
24 by regular US mail when for example we issue the final
25 scope of study or we issue the draft and final EIS.

1 I think that's it. Next slide. Okay. Thanks.
2 Next we're going to go into the oral comment portion.
3 Our MC is coming up now as we speak. Laura is going to
4 take care of the calling folks up for comments so I can
5 sit down and focus on listening to the people and getting
6 an understanding of what your concerns are. Thank you
7 for coming.

8 MS. ZIEMKE: We need to get a few things
9 rearranged here and then we'll get started. All right.
10 Can you hear me?

11 (Audience Response.)

12 MS. ZIEMKE: All right. We're ready to get going.
13 So now we're ready to begin the second portion of our
14 meeting this evening, the oral comment period. So if
15 there's anyone out there who wanted to make a comment but
16 didn't get an opportunity to or you didn't check mark
17 your sign-in card, we will at the end of the comments we
18 will ask you to raise your hands and we'll invite you to
19 come up.

20 So we have a court reporter here this evening.
21 She's here. She will be transcribing everything that's
22 said. So if you are making a comment please know that
23 these will be public. So if there's anything personal
24 that you don't want put out to the public, don't include
25 them in your comments.

1 It's important that you speak clearly and face our
2 court reporter as you're speaking. We'll ask you to
3 state your name and spell it. And then if you are with
4 an organization please include the organization name.

5 Each speaker will get three minutes to provide
6 your comments. So if you have more than three minutes'
7 worth to share, please focus on your most important
8 comments first. And we ask everyone to please honor that
9 three minutes, because there are twenty-six people who
10 signed up to speak tonight. We want to make sure they
11 all get their opportunity to speak.

12 In order to manage that process once you get to
13 have thirty seconds remaining, Tiffany will hold up a
14 card just to let you know have you thirty minutes to go.

15 MR. NAVECKY: Thirty seconds.

16 MS. ZIEMKE: Or thirty seconds. And then when
17 your time is up she'll flip it to a card that says stop.
18 If you haven't stopped speaking I will come up behind you
19 and tap you on the shoulder to remind you that we really
20 need to be giving everyone their opportunity to speak.

21 I also wanted to make sure everyone understands
22 that this is an oral comment period. We are not taking
23 questions. There's no question and answer period. After
24 the oral comment period is finished Phillis and Dave will
25 be here. You're welcome to reach out to them to ask them

1 any questions or any of us with ICF can also help you.

2 And I think with that we'll go ahead and begin.
3 So the process is I'm going to call the first two people
4 up. I will ask the second person to go ahead and have a
5 seat or stand over here. And then each time I will call
6 one more person up so we always have someone right here
7 to step up and begin speaking.

8 So the first individual is Sylvia Graham. If you
9 can please come forward. And then also Daniel Anderson.

10 MS. SYLVIA GRAHAM: My name is Sylvia Graham.
11 S-y-l-v-i-a. Graham. G-r-a-h-a-m. I come here tonight,
12 I'm on the Porter County Council, and I want to share
13 your concerns about safety and drainage to start.

14 Everything south of Division Road flows south, the
15 water, and into the Kankakee River. That's how our
16 County works. Farmers and the County have worked hard to
17 try and get drainage systems to make our problems as less
18 as they can be with drainage. We now have a Drainage
19 Board or a Stormwater Board set up. However, we are not
20 prepared to fix the problems that a railroad might
21 possibly come in and cause. We have our problems that we
22 want to fix of our own.

23 Also roads are going to be closed. I'm very
24 concerned about safety for school. You're close to one
25 of our schools down south. And all the school buses that

1 run through our County, they come from the south schools
2 taking handicapped children up into the north part of the
3 County. It's a real concern of mine.

4 I want to mention one other thing. Nobody will
5 speak up for them, but I will. I'm very concerned about
6 the wildlife that will be disproportionately put out.
7 And we now have deer in our yard and everything else
8 running around. And I think this is going to cause a lot
9 of problems, problems that we don't really need. I don't
10 want to say it's a nuisance, but, you know, it is what it
11 is.

12 MS. ZIEMKE: Thomas Fath. Thomas.

13 MR. DANIEL ANDERSON: Good evening. My name is
14 Daniel Anderson. I'm the utility superintendent for the
15 Town of Westville. I prepared a three-page document with
16 environmental concerns due to the railroad. And with
17 three minutes I cannot get it in for you, but I have
18 submitted a copy to the court reporter and wish that you
19 would examine it at your leisure. Thank you.

20 MR. NAVECKY: Thank you.

21 (Whereupon, the court reporter tendered

22 Mr. Anderson's report to Mr. Navecky.)

23 MS. ZIEMKE: Rod Gardin. Rod?

24 MR. TOM FATH: Tom Fath. T-o-m. F-a-t-h. I'm
25 representing the Town of Westville. Our County sits at a

1 crossroad. It is the responsibility of every citizen to
2 gain an understanding of the whole scope of this project.
3 I speak as a concerned yet open citizen to all
4 opportunities entering into our County. I use the term
5 opportunity because we need to look at everything not as
6 a problem but -- because if we look at everything as a
7 problem and focus on a problem we cannot work as a unit
8 to find a solution.

9 It is a fact that North Dakota produces crude oil
10 that needs to be transferred to refineries in the
11 northeast. It is a fact as of February 52 percent of the
12 oil transported to the northeast refineries is by rail
13 according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration.

14 It is a fact here in LaPorte County we're in the
15 path of the current rail system that transports oil to
16 the refineries in the northeast according to the State
17 Emergency Response Initiative.

18 Think about the increased risk. It is a fact
19 currently that oil is being shipped to the City of
20 Chicago or is being held up for one to three days adding
21 significant distribution cost and endangering a mass
22 amount of people, which is one reason we see these
23 proposed rail lines through our communities.

24 It is a fact that with the Keystone pipeline
25 project delay the rail system has become the next

1 economical option to transport crude oil. After all, the
2 federal government has put a price on life. We are worth
3 \$8,000,000 a person according to the Food and Drug
4 Administration, if you were wondering.

5 My question to you is, what's your family's worth
6 to us? It is a fact that some of the oil from North
7 Dakota is unstable which is why we have witnessed the
8 catastrophe in Canada, claiming forty-seven lives,
9 destroying a town and dumping 1.5 million gallons of
10 crude oil.

11 I would like to mention in Canada 97 percent of
12 the natural gas and petroleum products in the country are
13 being transferred via pipeline. It is a fact that in the
14 event of a catastrophe railroad companies have
15 insufficient insurance coverage to pay for most extreme
16 accident damages and disasters.

17 Damages may require public investment to rebuild
18 lives, fund soil, or whatever remediation and
19 reconstruction for that local economy. Furthermore, an
20 explosion can inflict severe property damage that can
21 disrupt communities and neighborhoods according to the
22 Community and Regional Development Institute at Cornell
23 University.

24 We saw an example of this in the Canada
25 derailment.

1 It is a fact that if this proposed rail network is
2 approved by the Surface Board Transportation the doors
3 are wide open for crude oil to be shipped at high speeds
4 in large volumes through our communities should oil
5 trains be allowed to transfer at high speeds.

6 The community I represent here tonight is the Town
7 of Westville. There is currently a proposed rail line
8 that cuts through the heart of our town. There is
9 roughly 2,000 residents that live within 600 to 2,000
10 feet of the proposed rail lines crossing Highway 421.
11 Each resident is worth more than a million dollars in the
12 cost to rebuild our town.

13 Here in Westville we know a thing or two about oil
14 contamination. We are battling with the cleanup of the
15 Cam-Or Superfund site for over thirty years which
16 impacted our community greatly.

17 We ask the Surface Transportation Board as the
18 overseeing federal entity to not allow the proposed
19 railroad to pass through the Town of Westville city
20 limits. Remember the facts, please.

21 MS. ZIEMKE: Ken Layton. And also we were asked
22 to turn off the air conditioner. Apparently people were
23 having trouble hearing. If it becomes uncomfortable let
24 us know right away and we'll turn it back on.

25 (Audience Response.)

1 MS. ZIEMKE: You want it back on? All right.

2 MR. ROD GARDIN: My name is Rod Gardin. R-o-d.
3 G-a-r-d-i-n. I'm the superintendent of East Porter
4 County Schools. And we serve the students of Kouts,
5 which is Pleasant Township, Morgan Township and
6 Washington Township. Our school district is quite large.
7 We cover 130 square miles and have thirty-five bus
8 routes.

9 I have five concerns about this proposed railway.
10 Presently we have sixteen crossings in East Porter County
11 Schools. With this proposed rail line that amount would
12 almost double to thirty-one.

13 We try to avoid railway crossings at all times
14 with our busses to ensure our students are safe.
15 Increasing the number of railway crossings will require
16 us to cross those more and endanger our students.

17 In a collision with a train and a school bus the
18 train always wins. We can't have that. Other concerns
19 are derailments. This line is proposed to come a half a
20 mile away from Morgan Township Schools where there are
21 approximately 600 children. We're concerned that what
22 may be transported in this rail line could be hazardous
23 and particularly hazardous if they were spilled.

24 Also this rail line would cut off certain County
25 roads which would increase the amount of time it takes

1 the emergency vehicles to respond to our schools. We
2 often have emergency calls requiring EMS, or police, or
3 fire come to our schools. If the roads are no longer
4 available it will take longer to respond endangering more
5 lives.

6 Also with County roads being cut off the length of
7 our bus routes would have to increase. Because of that
8 the students would be on the bus longer both in the
9 morning and in the afternoon.

10 Finally the noise pollution particularly for
11 Morgan Township Schools being just a half mile away from
12 the proposed line. The information I read said there can
13 be up to 110 trains a day. The horn on a train sounds at
14 110 decibels. That horn must be sounded from fifteen to
15 twenty seconds at each crossing, again near Morgan
16 Township Schools. If we have 110 trains a day a horn
17 sounding for 15 seconds, that equals 27.45 hours a day,
18 more than one day's worth of continual train horn blasts
19 that pollutes the environment.

20 Also children are more sensitive than adults to
21 that kind of sound. Research studies have shown that
22 children who go to school near a railway are typically
23 one year behind their peers who were not in that kind of
24 situation. Also the World Health Organization has stated
25 the maximum acceptable noise level for a school

1 playground is 55 decibels. Each increase of 10 decibels
2 means twice the perceived loudness. A 110 decibel train
3 horn is 32 times louder than what the World Health
4 Organization says is reasonable.

5 Finally, the air pollution. Diesel exhaust for
6 locomotives contain more than forty toxic air
7 contaminants, carcinogens, ozone, smog-forming compounds
8 and fine particulate matters. The exposure to fine
9 particles is known to cause asthma attacks, heart
10 attacks, lung cancer, strokes and even premature death.

11 All of this would be one-half mile of one of our
12 schools. Thank you.

13 MS. ZIEMKE: Leola. Leola.

14 MR. KEN LAYTON: I'm Ken Layton. L-a-y-t-o-n.
15 And I'm a property owner along the proposed route. First
16 I would like to thank the Board for bringing this
17 information to us. Two weeks ago I never heard of the
18 Great Lakes Basin Railway. Since then I've heard about
19 it about 3,000 times a day.

20 We are here, my wife and I, are here tonight to
21 become informed. All we know is what we read in the
22 paper or read on-line. What we understand is that this
23 has great potential for economic growth both here in
24 Wisconsin and Illinois and everywhere along the line.

25 We also know that this rail is going to be 200

1 feet from the back of our house. Not only does it go 200
2 feet from the back of our house, but it splits the house
3 and our barns so it will actually divide the barn in two.

4 We would like to have more information. And my
5 wife is the computer wiz. I'm not. She's found out how
6 to get on-line and read everything that you've put out
7 and read everything that the Great Lakes Basin Rail
8 Service themselves have put out. But we think that with
9 having, I mean, look at the crowd. You say it's been
10 like this all along. I can't imagine what the civic
11 auditorium will be like tomorrow night.

12 The misinformation is harming us more than the
13 real information. When my wife found out there was going
14 to be 110 trains a day go behind our house, I'm not quite
15 sure she wants to stay with me anymore.

16 But then we learned tonight from the news media
17 that that's not quite true. It might be as little as
18 twenty trains behind the house. And some people would
19 say even twenty trains is too much.

20 Unfortunately, I'm old enough to remember when the
21 railroad used to run behind my house. And there was no
22 more than twenty trains a day then. And I don't see
23 where there was trouble at that point in time, but I'm
24 talking years and years ago. Maybe I won't even be here
25 when this thing comes to fruition if indeed it is

1 approved by your Board. Thank you.

2 MS. ZIEMKE: Randall. Kristina Randall.

3 MS. LEOLA NIKSCH: Leola Nicksch. L-e-o-l-a.

4 N-i-k-s-c-h. I have lived on my farm for sixty-three
5 years. The land is just priceless as far as I'm
6 concerned. It is going to be passed on to my son, my
7 children. My son is a farmer. And then hopefully my
8 grandchildren and my great grandchildren. But now with
9 this railroad going through it won't be worth anything.

10 I found out today it won't be just two fields.
11 It's going to contain four fields that it will be subject
12 to. Because there's going to be, the railroad is going
13 to go through but there's going to be an intersection.
14 And the intersection is going to be an eighth of a mile
15 from the railroad which I don't understand why they
16 should have that.

17 Put a rail system straight through the middle of
18 my two fields and then the intersection. And I have the
19 CNN railroad going through my farm already. And it runs
20 a train about every fifteen minutes. And now this one --
21 Canadian National, goes east and west. This railroad is
22 going to go north and south. I can't imagine what's
23 going to happen when they cross. The CNN already blocks
24 my crossings anywhere from ten minutes to four to five
25 hours. I know the law says they should only do it for

1 ten minutes. However, the railroad does it their way.

2 Canadian National there are two tracks. And just
3 past the intersection they are going to make there's only
4 one track. And that's why the Canadian National stops so
5 often. The Great Lakes Basin is offering \$20,000 per
6 acre with stipulations. But this is nothing compared to
7 what, compared to the future income from these fields
8 plus the devaluation of my farm.

9 This is forever. Our precious land cannot be
10 replaced. We must preserve it just right now. To me it
11 looks as if the citizens are being railroaded. I oppose
12 this project.

13 MS. ZIEMKE: Elwood and Deborah Grieger

14 MS. KRISTINA RANDALL: My name is Kristina
15 Randall. Kristina is, K-r-i-s-t-i-n-a. Randall,
16 R-a-n-d-a-l-l. Like many here I am from a farm family
17 that goes back several generations and do have the same
18 concerns about losing money from potential loss of
19 acreage that we count for our livelihood. My immediate
20 family and I own land in both Porter County in the Morgan
21 Township area and LaPorte County in the Cass Township
22 area.

23 I also have the same concerns about the potential
24 contamination of our wells and drinking water in the
25 event of a derailment with the water all running south

1 into the Kankakee River Basin.

2 The third concern I want to bring to the attention
3 of the Surface Transportation Board has to do with
4 students getting to school. Student drivers are a
5 particular concern to me. I'm the guidance counselor at
6 South Central Junior Senior High School which is just
7 northeast of Wanatah in rural Union Mills.

8 I'm not sure if you are aware, but Indiana does
9 operate under open enrollment. This means that students
10 can choose to attend public schools outside of the
11 district in which they live. 27 percent of the students
12 in grades seven through twelve and 26 percent of the
13 students in K through six that attend South Central are
14 open enrollment students which means many of them are
15 traveling from places such as Westville, Michigan City
16 and LaPorte where they would be having to cross rail
17 lines if the Great Lakes project goes through.

18 Many do choose to take the cross country approach
19 and avoid the highways. So that is the ultimate concern
20 there. I hate to pick on teenagers because they do often
21 unfairly get a bad rap, but the fact is they do not have
22 driving experience that we have when we are older and
23 they are oftentimes bigger risk-takers.

24 I worry not only about the added travel time that
25 our students will have getting to and from school if this

1 rail project goes through, but also the potential for
2 accidents if the railroad crossings that may happen on
3 numerous rural roads that the Great Lakes Basin Railroad
4 may cross. Particularly again with these inexperienced
5 student drivers, many of which will probably be rushing
6 because they want to avoid that next tardy and cause a
7 detention.

8 South Central has already been through a tragic
9 train and car accident in which several students lost
10 their lives in 2008. And I definitely don't want the
11 increased likelihood that something like that to happen
12 again. Thank you for your time and consideration.

13 MS. ZIEMKE: Mark Geskey.

14 MR. ELWOOD GRIEGER: Good evening. My name is
15 Elwood Grieger. E-l-w-o-o-d. Grieger, G-r-i-e-g-e-r.
16 My wife and I live on the family farm that was
17 established in 1870s which is four miles northwest of
18 LaCrosse on South County Line Road. And for you that
19 don't know it, the town of Wanatah's name means "knee
20 deep in mud." So that tells us of some of the soil
21 conditions during the rainy season that we have in the
22 Kankakee River Valley.

23 We're opposed to the new rail system because I
24 went to our conservation club and presented about the
25 same thing that I am telling you folks tonight. And our

1 conservation club of the greater Wanatah area
2 conservation club met in the adjoining room here at the
3 Legion. And they were unanimous in me coming and talking
4 to you folks.

5 They have concerns about noise pollution for
6 wildlife and for the people around the area. Also they
7 have problems with the migratory and native birds that
8 would be affected by this rail system with the noise
9 pollution and to the hazardous materials that may be
10 transported on this rail system.

11 So some of our members live within a mile of the
12 proposed rail site. And I say proposed because it may
13 change. We don't know for sure. But we've seen the
14 outline. And I'll stand down at this time. I just want
15 to say that we oppose that and our club opposes that.
16 And thank you for your time.

17 MS. ZIEMKE: Hugh Martz. Hugh? All right. Mark
18 Scarborough.

19 MR. MARK GESKEY: My name is Mark Geskey.
20 M-a-r-k. G-e-s-k-e-y. I come here representing myself
21 and my wife and my family and all my good friends from
22 this area. We moved out in the country for peace and
23 quiet. There are railroads out here, but we don't have
24 to hear them that much. That's one thing. That's a
25 noise factor.

1 The quality in the water is great out where we
2 live by Westville. And we don't want that to change.
3 Railroads, if you walk beside a railroad track, there is
4 always oily messes over the place. And that's without a
5 derailment. Where does that oily mess go? It goes into
6 the ground to our drinking water. That is not what I
7 want. I live out in the country. And I want to stay in
8 the country. I oppose this railroad.

9 MR. HUGH MARTZ: My name is Hugh Martz, M-a-r-t-z,
10 of Martz & Lucas law firm in Valparaiso. I speak on
11 behalf of clients in LaPorte, Porter and Lake Counties
12 who oppose the proposed railroad unanimously.

13 No amount of mitigation or mediation or
14 modification of the plan can make it acceptable in our
15 view. The Board should deny the license. And the
16 negative impact includes some of these.

17 The road bed cuts through some of our best farm
18 lands in these communities separating us in ways that can
19 never be reconnected.

20 Secondly, the road bed will destroy or
21 substantially impair miles of well functioning drainage.

22 Thirdly, it will significantly interfere with
23 vehicular traffic.

24 Fourth, train traffic will burn thousands of
25 gallons of diesel fuel daily polluting the air.

1 Fifth, there will be nearly constant noise
2 pollution.

3 Six, school busses, EMS, fire, police, travel and
4 safety will be put at risk.

5 And finally spills and leaks will pollute the
6 soil, water and air. And many of us know the water
7 tables in some areas is very high. If there's a spill
8 it's going to affect the aquifers for miles around.
9 Thank you very much.

10 MS. ZIEMKE: I understand that people are still
11 having trouble hearing. So I just want to let the
12 speakers know I'm going to stay up here. If I see that
13 you are dropping the microphone I'm going to just let you
14 know. Okay? Bud Thomas. Bud Thomas.

15 MR. MARK SCARBOROUGH: Hello, my name is Mark
16 Scarborough. M-a-r-k. S-c-a-r-b-o-r-o-u-g-h. My family
17 and I reside in LaCrosse which is located in the southern
18 part of LaPorte County. We are four generation farmers.
19 We want to share some of our concerns about the
20 agriculture impacts in northwest Indiana.

21 LaPorte County is the second largest County in the
22 State of Indiana. 54 percent of LaPorte County is in
23 production of agriculture. 66 percent of that is farm
24 land. And LaPorte County is irrigated making LaPorte
25 County the largest irrigated County in the State of

1 Indiana.

2 It costs approximately 650 to \$1,400 per acre per
3 field for a center pivot irrigation system. Your
4 proposed railroad will make many of these irrigation
5 systems unusable or there will be large costs to retrofit
6 these irrigation systems. We want to know who is going
7 to pay for this.

8 Also it's going to devalue a lot of the farm
9 ground around that area where the irrigation will not be
10 usable. Irrigation allows us as farmer more options of
11 crops outside of corn and soybeans. It allows us to
12 raise specialty crops such as cucumbers, tomatoes, green
13 beans, popcorn, seed corn, sweet corn, pumpkins and many
14 more things in LaPorte.

15 Another concern about the irrigation is the
16 ownership. Many of these irrigation systems are not
17 owned by the landowner. The farmer has a lease with the
18 landowner to farm the land but the farmer pays for the
19 cost of the irrigation system.

20 Irrigators are expensive but are an essential part
21 of agriculture in LaPorte County. In 2013 agriculture
22 brought \$227 million of revenue to LaPorte County. The
23 loss of irrigation to a farm can result in annual losses
24 of tens of thousands of dollars per farm.

25 Another concern is drainage which has already been

1 met. I will have to say though I have worked on many
2 railroads along the edges and along the ditches. And
3 many times the culverts that have been there for fifty,
4 sixty years are not deep enough so it does stop drainage,
5 some of these old railroads.

6 I am a farmer, land owner and business owner.
7 What I'm asking on behalf of agriculture is for you to
8 realize the true cost of this project for the farmer and
9 not just the land owners. This is impacting not only the
10 land and the food we produce, but our income and our
11 livelihood.

12 Please look at how this railroad will impact the
13 vitality of agriculture in northwest Indiana. And when
14 you do, be sure you realize the clothing on your back,
15 fuel in your vehicle, pencil and paper in your hand and
16 the last meal you ate all came from a farm. But the very
17 first stage is the irrigation in LaPorte County. It may
18 have come from right here. Thank you for your time.

19 MS. ZIEMKE: John Mischke.

20 MR. TOM FATH: Tom Fath. T-o-m. F-a-t-h. I'm
21 representing New Durham Estates Manufactured Home
22 Community in Westville, Indiana. I myself am a third
23 generation owner of a property where my dad and my
24 grandpa is still involved in the business as well. We
25 have roughly a thousand residents that will live 600 feet

1 from this railroad. It will cause substantial noise
2 pollution to our residents. You can imagine the value of
3 their homes will actually go down because of this.

4 Another opportunity we have is we worked hand in
5 hand with the LaPorte County Parks Department to develop
6 a walking trail that goes behind our community and
7 connected up with their park just west of us. And that
8 will be within 100 feet of their property there.

9 Currently where the railroad is proposed it
10 interferes with our wellhead protection plan. And also
11 just as a business owner selling homes in a manufactured
12 home community that we've invested three generations in
13 will be substantially difficult with a railroad 600 feet
14 from our property. And that's all I have. Thank you.

15 MS. ZIEMKE: Glen Minich.

16 MR. JOHN MISCHKE: My name is John Mischke.
17 That's, J-o-h-n, M-i-s-c-h-k-e. I live in Westville. I
18 work south of Valpo. My kids go to South Central. And
19 my ex-wife lives just south of 30. On my busy days I
20 will cross over this proposed rail line multiple times.
21 But that's the least of my concerns.

22 You've already heard a lot about how it's going to
23 affect the Town of Westville. I live in the center of
24 town. And I just want to note that the tracks that are
25 currently south of town are 2.2 miles from roughly the

1 middle of town on 421 near Main Street and the library.
2 The new tracks will be 1.4 miles south, that's 33 percent
3 closer. We already hear the tracks to the south. The
4 tracks north that will go by New Durham are less than a
5 mile from the center of town.

6 My biggest concern is Bluhm County Park which has
7 miles of trails. It has wetlands. It has a small pond.
8 It is used by a lot of people from both LaPorte and
9 Porter Counties.

10 The construction alone, right now the proposed
11 line is roughly 150 feet from the park. The construction
12 run-off alone will pollute the wetlands on the west side
13 of the park, the pond on the east side of the park.
14 There's a population of tree frogs. The dog park. My
15 dogs are going to be freaked out by it.

16 I mean, the way it goes close to the park and the
17 pollution it's likely to cause, it's a joke. And it's
18 not a funny one.

19 My biggest alternative is if there's a demand to
20 ship stuff around Chicago is to use existing lines. They
21 are already depending on the different lines running out.
22 There's at least four to six lines going east/west in our
23 area. There's got to be a way for somebody to connect
24 the spur, somebody smarter than me, than building this
25 270 mile loop around that's disrupting this many people's

1 lives.

2 I don't care who is making the money off of it.
3 The railroad laws were put into effect, the eminent
4 domain railroad laws, in the 1800s for the public good.
5 And what company is making the money off those lines,
6 that has no interest in the public good.

7 The other thing about this, when the railroad laws
8 came into effect railroads were the biggest and best
9 thing ever. It was basically the most efficient and only
10 way to move things. That has changed big time. This
11 industry has been going downhill for over 100 years. And
12 it's going to continue to. They had a surge in 2009
13 because of oil, but actually the last couple years it's
14 dropped off.

15 And I think the big question needs to be, is this
16 railroad, is it sustainable? Are any railroads
17 sustainable? But in 100 years are we still going to have
18 railroads? But if you put in this new line and allow it
19 to be built, in 100 years the effects to the communities
20 that is still going to be being dealt with. Thank you.

21 MS. ZIEMKE: Gregory Barker. Gregory.

22 MR. GLEN MINICH: My name is Glen Minich.
23 M-i-n-i-c-h. I'm a local farmer. Today I wanted to talk
24 a little bit about my concern. My concern is the line of
25 the railroad that's proposed that's north into LaPorte

1 County and then makes a turn east after crossing the CSX
2 railroad.

3 That line is going to go through several wet areas
4 and then it reconnects to an old abandoned railroad which
5 runs down my driveway, backyard, through a couple
6 (unintelligable) area we have, through some irrigated
7 fields, but they're going to use an abandoned railroad.
8 I'm sure they saw it there, but that railroad runs
9 through several wet areas.

10 And it already has a high bank. It gets
11 particularly high where it crosses the Travis Ditch where
12 it nears the CN railroad. The Wabash railroad I think
13 was actually discontinued because there's a bridge that
14 was abandoned because it was no longer of any use. So
15 that would have to be removed and replaced.

16 When I looked at this project and they said this
17 line is being put in place to connect to the South Shore
18 freight line, and I took a look at it and I noticed that,
19 and I knew that the CSX line runs directly to KIP and a
20 proposed interval is actually built and in place there at
21 this time.

22 So that whole line could be simply eliminated by
23 either using the current line of the CSX or getting an
24 easement to lay one new rail directly beside the line
25 that's there. The entrance to the KIP is in place. The

1 rail yard is in place. The redevelopment commission in
2 LaPorte County is currently connecting that to the South
3 Shore freight.

4 So that whole line is totally a duplication of a
5 rail that exists today. And there is absolutely no
6 reason for it to go through there that I can see.

7 If this new Great Lakes Basin Railroad can't work
8 with the CSX, they're not going to be in business very
9 long. That's all I have to say. Thank you.

10 MS. ZIEMKE: Dan Steinhilber. Dan.

11 MR. GREGORY BARKER: Gregory Barker.

12 G-r-e-g-o-r-y. B-a-r-k-e-r. I have two reasons for
13 coming to the meeting tonight. I don't live in the local
14 area anymore, but I grew up here. My family owns
15 property along the Monon right-of-way. And I remember
16 how that house used to shake when the Monon went by. I
17 don't know if the foundation of that 100-plus year old
18 farmhouse is going to react to the kind of vibrations
19 that can go along with when the railroad goes by again.
20 I'm sure there's other people that have the same sort of
21 concern.

22 The other reason for coming here is I'm a
23 locomotive engineer for one of those Class I railroads
24 you previously mentioned. I run trains into Chicago.
25 I'm very familiar with the congestion problems.

1 A lot of times the problems aren't necessarily a
2 lack of track, but of connections from one railroad to
3 another. You bring a train in and there's no crew there
4 from the interchanging railroad there to pick it up. So
5 there it sits. Chicago has been practicing this for a
6 long time. They are equipped to do it. Just get an
7 engineer there. There are hotels there.

8 I would ask the STB to look carefully at not only
9 what the Great Lakes Basin plans to do but how they
10 intend to do it. The only interchange track that I see
11 on that map is to the Norfolk Southern. So they haven't
12 really stated how they intend to hook up with the Class I
13 railroads. If they got a better way of doing it than is
14 being done now, that's great. But if they have
15 interchange tracks that are too short and they aren't
16 able to control how the traffic flows from one railroad
17 to the other, then all this is going to accomplish is to
18 bring part of Chicago's congested problem to northwest
19 Indiana and Rockford, Illinois where we're not used to
20 dealing with it. That's all I have. Thank you.

21 MS. ZIEMKE: Julia Rosner. Rosner. Are you out
22 there, Julia? Okay. I'll move on to the next one.
23 Virginia Perkins.

24 MS. VIRGINIA PERKINS: No. They already said it
25 all.

1 MS. ZIEMKE: Sean Jacks. Sean.

2 MR. DAN STEINHILBER: My name is Dan Steinhilber.
3 S-t-e-i-n-h-i-l-b-e-r. I would like to thank the STB for
4 coming to Indiana to hear our concerns. As a lifetime
5 resident of Porter County I lived in Boone Township for
6 twelve years, Porter Township for six years, Morgan
7 Township for the past thirty years.

8 Because the proposed rail line goes through all
9 three townships, I have friends and family many of whom
10 are farmers in all three townships that would be affected
11 by the proposed rail line. The proposed rail line will
12 slice through many of the fields disrupting their
13 drainage and irrigation systems.

14 In 2005 I was able to purchase land and build a
15 house in Morgan Township. And now in 2016 I am here
16 because the proposal for the railroad comes within
17 eighty-five feet of my property line and 116 feet from my
18 home.

19 The noise pollution and vibration are huge
20 concerns to my family's well-being living that close to a
21 railroad. The exhaust emitted from the number of daily
22 proposed train engines and the possibility of coal dust
23 coming right next to my home is also a huge concern.

24 I live on State Road 49. And the plan also calls
25 for an overpass onto State Road 49. The overpass would

1 basically be in my front yard. So I'm very concerned
2 about the drainage from the proposed overpass and the
3 visual effect this overpass would have on our family
4 home.

5 I'm also the father of two children that attend
6 Morgan Township School. The school is located less than
7 a half mile from the proposed rail line. If there would
8 be an accident of hazardous chemicals the school would
9 have very little time to evacuate our children safely.

10 I am also concerned that our small volunteer fire
11 departments would not be equipped to handle such a train
12 derailment. Thank you.

13 MS. ZIEMKE: Martin O'Neill. Martin.

14 MR. SEAN JACKS: Sean Jacks. S-e-a-n. J-a-c-k-s.
15 I'm here from the Westville Community Volunteer Fire
16 Department and also a resident in the center of town.

17 My biggest concerns as well as the fire department
18 is the safety. First of all, why is it surrounding the
19 Town of Westville? Why does this have to be on the west
20 side? Why does it have to surround Westville? Why does
21 this have to be on the west side and encompass the entire
22 town? If it has to be built it needs to be moved to the
23 east.

24 Adding two rail lines encompassing all of
25 Westville and all of the crossings that will be added

1 along with hazardous materials through the area, it's
2 really going to affect our response as a fire department
3 along with our other departments that need to come to
4 assist us.

5 The potential to be delayed by the added crossings
6 by either slow moving trains or stopped trains, along
7 with the police departments and EMS response, which is a
8 big concern for us in Westville since we have to have EMS
9 coming out of Wanatah, Michigan City, or LaPorte.

10 Last year our fire department responded to 512
11 calls. EMS needed to respond to our area 445 times for
12 either medical or accidents. Out of that 418 were
13 medical, 27 were standbys for fires or dangerous
14 conditions. Out of those numbers, 75 times they had to
15 respond in between those two tracks which is basically
16 the center of town.

17 Wanatah base currently already for EMS has to
18 cross two railroad tracks and is quite often delayed by a
19 train. Adding another one on the south side would delay
20 it possibly even longer. If they have to go up to the
21 trailer park in Durham Estates that would be another one
22 to cross at this point.

23 Michigan City base which is a little bit longer
24 does not have any tracks to cross. They go underneath a
25 bridge. They do have one more track possibly if they

1 would have to come south if Wanatah is busy or does not
2 have enough availability.

3 LaPorte base is the other option for EMS and it
4 will have a new one also on Highway 2 if they have to
5 come to Westville. We get serviced by all three
6 jurisdictions for EMS. So that's our biggest concern.
7 It seems like these tracks would be virtually cutting off
8 the entire town for emergency services. That's all I
9 have to say.

10 MS. ZIEMKE: Steve Dattilo.

11 MR. MARTIN O'WEILL: My name is Martin O'Weill.
12 M-a-r-t-i-n. O-W-e-i-l-l. I was surprised to find that
13 the proposed railroad track cut my farm in two, separated
14 the LaPorte County from the Porter County part of the
15 farm causing a lot of problems as far as crops, back and
16 forth across the farm. But I think these issues were
17 addressed very well at least yesterday and also some
18 today by Chris Goetz, who is my neighbor to the south.
19 And so I'm not going to go into that at all.

20 I am a physician. And I have spent a lot of time
21 dealing with traumatic and medical problems that require
22 emergency medical care. I was with my father in 1970
23 when he started the Porter Memorial Emergency Unit. So I
24 have some familiarity with this area and the emergency
25 needs.

1 And after I helped my father do that I spent a
2 year in Vietnam using helicopters to evacuate. So I do
3 have understanding of these problems. And the issues
4 here raised by this proposed railroad track I think
5 causes a good number of medical issues.

6 There's an obvious problem of accidents on Highway
7 30 and 421 and getting them to emergency rooms quickly.
8 And I think the fastest route is actually probably Porter
9 Hospital. And you have to go across probably three
10 lines, maybe four if you are down in the south County.
11 And there's going to be another line put across 421 which
12 is going to block all traffic coming from the south going
13 to Porter Hospital also to the LaPorte Hospital or
14 Michigan City hospitals. The last speaker was addressing
15 those issues also.

16 In the last twenty years or so with angioplasty
17 there's a term cardiologists have come to use. They say,
18 "Time is muscle." They mean heart muscle. And it also
19 now refers also to the brain, because clots can be
20 removed from the carotid arteries and restore blood flow
21 to their brain. So it's very critical that patients get
22 to the hospital in time.

23 So I would hope that the Board would at least talk
24 to the County Health Commission. I don't know if that
25 has been done yet or is planned, but I think it would be

1 a very important part of this evaluation. I'd like to
2 thank the Board for hearing me.

3 MS. ZIEMKE: Sheila Snook.

4 MR. STEVEN DATTILO: Hi. My name is Steve Dattilo
5 of Dattilo Appraisal & Realty. D-a-t-t-i-l-o. And I am
6 a real estate appraiser. So there's no doubt that rail
7 lines especially freight lines have --

8 (Voices from the crowd.)

9 MR. STEVEN DATTILO: Is that better? I am a real
10 estate appraiser and there is no doubt that freight lines
11 have an adverse effect on residential property.

12 I have two specific issues with your proposal.
13 One is locally. One is regionally. Locally what you are
14 going to do is you are going to split the town of
15 Westville right in half. There's new residential
16 development to the south. We just spent all of our tax
17 dollars in this room to widen U.S. Highway 421. There's
18 further development to the north. Once you put that line
19 in no bank is going to give a developer any money to
20 develop that property. You are going to run right south
21 of Bluhm Lake County Park. You're going to run right
22 south of a manufactured home community with a very high
23 population.

24 So the route is just horrendous. It's a stated
25 fact that the region's population continues to move south

1 and east. So, I mean, you are killing the demographic
2 movement of the region with this line. There's no way to
3 not do it. Whether it be Lake County, or LaPorte County,
4 or southern Porter County. It's where the population is
5 moving.

6 As far as regionally, though, what you're doing to
7 us is that I understand there is some use for the lines
8 to run oil out of here. But part of the reason these
9 guys are doing it is because all the Fortune 500 and
10 Fortune 1000 companies have now located to Wisconsin.
11 One of the things that Indiana has been criticized of is
12 we have no spec ready large warehouse space or industrial
13 space. We're attempting to address that.

14 You build this railway what you are going to do is
15 you are going to take all that commerce, you're going to
16 run it right around the region right back into Wisconsin.
17 And that's just not fair. You are going to take our land
18 to benefit another region. And that's all I have.

19 MS. ZIEMKE: Chris Goetz.

20 (Audience Response.)

21 MS. ZIEMKE: Really? Chris Goetz.

22 MS. SHEILA SNOOK: My name is Sheila Snook.

23 S-h-e-i-l-a. S-n-o-o-k. I am here to address the impact
24 of noise and vibration at Morgan School. I am a special
25 education teacher at Morgan. I have taught special needs

1 children for thirty-five years. I teach many autistic,
2 learning disabled, attention deficit, emotionally
3 disabled. I have lots of experience with these kinds of
4 children. And I'm very concerned of how they'll be
5 impacted with the railroad.

6 Most of my students in my room when they test the
7 fire siren one time a month are already impacted by that.
8 So having frequent train whistles and horns and rattling
9 and vibrations on tracks is definitely going to cause a
10 disruption in the classrooms. It's going to cause a
11 disruption on the playground when we as teachers try to
12 intervene with situations or line children up.

13 My autistic children are often affected in that
14 they will scream and bang their heads. And sounds that I
15 don't even hear they hear. Anybody that has any
16 interaction with those special needs kids know that they
17 have a heightened sense of hearing and sight. And this
18 will bother them more than we really realize.

19 I also am concerned about the travel time. Many
20 of my students are bussed. When they are bussed they are
21 sometimes strapped in in harnesses. To have additional
22 time sitting on a bus or waiting for trains that changes
23 their routine and changes their day does impact us as
24 schools, does impact them.

25 If they have melt-downs on their bus, which it

1 does happen, then the bus driver has to deal with getting
2 them to school safely. And she needs to be or he needs
3 to be focusing on the drive and not that student. I do
4 feel like sitting and waiting for trains to pass and
5 lengthening their bus route will impact how these kids
6 feel each day as they come to school.

7 We do have about 100 special ed kids just at
8 Morgan alone. I have thirty in my room in the elementary
9 end. So I support everything Dr. Gardin said, but these
10 kids are near and dear to my heart or I wouldn't have
11 done this for thirty-five years. And I just want
12 somebody looking out for their welfare. Thank you.

13 MS. ZIEMKE: Beck. Vernon Beck.

14 MR. CHRIS GOETZ: Chris Goetz. C-h-r-i-s.
15 G-o-e-t-z. I spoke yesterday at the Valparaiso meeting
16 and stated all the different reasons why as a farmer that
17 I was opposed to this. And I'm not going to reiterate
18 all that, but I see a lot of farmers out here and they've
19 all said a lot of the same things.

20 One of the things I haven't heard mentioned is
21 that every farmer in this room and in northwest Indiana,
22 even the northern half of Indiana, depends upon the
23 Purdue Agricultural Center out here just west of Wanatah.
24 And this railroad is going to go right down through the
25 center of all of their plots.

1 And not only is that going to disrupt their using
2 of the plots, but it's going to disrupt the field days
3 and education seminars they have. Because I've spoken
4 with the director and he said he didn't know how they
5 would ever hold a field day and be able to talk with the
6 train frequency they have and also how they would even
7 transport people because they have their own trams that
8 they transport them with and they would have to cross the
9 railroad track in order to have the plot sessions.

10 We rely on them, all the findings they have. How
11 you use nitrogen, population density for your seed corn,
12 diseases, just any number of things that this facility
13 does for the farmers not only of northern Indiana but
14 anybody can benefit from all the region. And so far at
15 two meetings I haven't heard very many people for this.

16 But raise one hand if you are opposed to this.
17 And raise both hands if you are strongly opposed to this.
18 Just so you can see.

19 (Audience Response.)

20 MR. CHRIS GOETZ: I know you know this already,
21 but just so you can see. Thank you.

22 MS. ZIEMKE: The Jaskoviaks.

23 Mr. VERN BECK: Vern Beck. V-e-r-n. B-e-c-k. I
24 live in Boone Grove. And I represent, I'm union
25 president for the NIPSCO coworkers across the State of

1 Indiana. I'm going to take the liberty today to speak on
2 behalf of the 1.2 million customers that we serve for
3 NIPSCO.

4 As Sylvia Graham mention earlier, the watershed
5 from Division Road sheds toward the Kankakee River. The
6 way that you have the train coming through is it can
7 possibly block the water that's draining to the Kankakee
8 River.

9 My job description at NIPSCO is a station operator
10 which means I operate the equipment, the equipment at the
11 power plant to turn coal into electric. The last several
12 years it's became very critical with the warmer weather
13 and stuff that the Kankakee River gets very, very low to
14 critical stages that we have to dredge. And EPA permits
15 to dredge the river in order for the intake to be able to
16 provide the water to cool the equipment to run the power
17 plants.

18 If this train comes along and cuts off the
19 watershed it could possibly, because we get within four
20 inches of shutting down the plant the last several years
21 where it's been really, really tough to keep it running
22 in the summer when it's so hot. If this is just enough
23 to keep the water from getting down there where we need
24 it and we have to shut down the power plant, that means
25 us as consumers have to go out in the open market when

1 the megawatt is much more expensive and buy it on the
2 open market which means we are going to pay more for our
3 electric in order for them to make a profit off of their
4 line.

5 And I don't think that's fair to us. And that
6 will affect all the 1.2 million customers across the
7 State. So what happens here could affect someone in
8 Angola, Goshen, Hammond, anywhere else that are paying
9 for those higher megawatts.

10 Our plant is the biggest plant in northwest
11 Indiana creating over 1,500 megawatts. To go on the open
12 market is going to be very expensive. So I request a
13 watershed study to see how it will affect the Kankakee
14 River water levels during the summer. And I appreciate
15 the opportunity to share.

16 MS. ZIEMKE: Schmidt. Stacey Schmidt.

17 MS. BECKY JASCOVIK: Hi. My name is Becky
18 Jascoviak. J-a-s-c-o-v-i-a-k. And I am a fifth
19 generation resident of Porter County and currently reside
20 in a home that will disappear thanks to an overpass over
21 49. So I'd like to keep my home. And I am here, I have
22 a long history of working for several civic
23 organizations. And I'm not here officially representing
24 any of them, but through my history I have learned and
25 been party to granting out hundreds of thousands of

1 dollars of NOAA funding to organizations to remediate and
2 solve ecological problems across our area.

3 We have restored wetlands. We have restored
4 animal and plant habitats. We restore cultural and
5 historical resources. The train through our area and the
6 proposed route and the extension of the area that it may
7 also include, also includes archeological digs that the
8 University of Notre Dame professors and students have
9 been party to.

10 There's a new park proposed just south of the
11 tracks by 49. And this is a tourism draw for many people
12 out of the area who would have to then listen to trains
13 rather than their kids play softball. We don't have many
14 opportunities for recreation in the south of the County.
15 And this is one opportunity for us to do that.

16 There is a new bike trail proposed connecting the
17 Indiana Dunes to the Kankakee River of which this will
18 also cross.

19 And our north/south roads are most treacherous in
20 the winter. You cannot see to drive on north/south roads
21 in the winter in the snow. And that's where all the
22 train track crossings would be.

23 MR. JERALD JASCOVIK: My name is Jerald,
24 J-e-r-a-l-d, same last name. And many of the points have
25 already been talked on that have been addressed, I won't

1 go into those. But will go into my experience as being a
2 delivery driver for Sherwin Williams Paint in Hammond,
3 Indiana.

4 I have been sitting at railroad crossings running
5 freight lines for over a half hour in the past. So I
6 know this will definitely impact many people in those
7 areas. Being a teacher also, sound quality, Michigan
8 City, Indiana there is Marquette High School which runs
9 right next to the South Shore line. I have been there
10 many times. I know how much it's been disrupting their
11 classes.

12 Knowing the pollutants of East Chicago, Hammond
13 and Whiting. I got out of Lake County because of those
14 reasons. And now the plausibility of all these
15 pollutants of trains will come straight to Porter County
16 and turn it into another area just like that, industrial.

17 As a resident of Malden, in Malden we have every
18 year the Labor Day parade. And that's actually a big
19 tourist attraction. And many people do come to that. If
20 you are going to build an overpass, that's going to be
21 gone or have to be redirected. And that's a big deal to
22 many people that look forward to it that every year.

23 Farming equipment. We've already talked about
24 that. It will have to be rerouted onto 49 which will
25 cause traffic reroutements. Jake's Feed, which also

1 resides on 49 which is also a big provider to many of our
2 farmers here. That will have to have a road reroutement
3 or possibly it may be closed due to lack of business
4 because of the reroutement.

5 Lastly, because I do have my employment in Hammond
6 I have a forty-five minute commute as it is. I'm betting
7 that's going to double if this train track happens. And
8 I'm strongly against this and support all of you that are
9 the same. Thank you.

10 MS. ZIEMKE: Robert Martin. Robert Martin.

11 MS. STACEY SCHMIDT: My name is Stacey Schmidt.
12 S-t-a-c-e-y. S-c-h-m-i-d-t. I'm the superintendent of
13 Porter Township School Corporation. I'm here tonight to
14 express some concerns that I have. The proposed line
15 runs in the middle of my district. And it cuts off two
16 of my schools, Woodgrove Elementary and Woodgrove Middle
17 School, from the rest of the district.

18 Additionally, I have a transportation hub located
19 on that south side of the district. So all of my busses
20 come out of that south side that now is cut off by the
21 proposed rail line. That's a concern for me obviously
22 for getting busses to my school in a timely manner.

23 Additionally the rail crossings as you've heard
24 are going to increase travel time. Students on busses
25 are already on busses for a long time already. And it's

1 going to increase time as they're having to stop at rail
2 crossings. This is a concern for me for safety as well.

3 I had the opportunity to meet with Frank Patton
4 and ask some of these questions. Some additional
5 concerns for me are that he could not answer any
6 derailment questions for me.

7 So we have the best volunteer fire department
8 around in Boone Grove and they are incredible. But part
9 of our safety plan calls for extra time for emergency
10 response. So because of where we're located and not
11 having our own police department, we have the amazing
12 Porter County Sheriff and volunteer fire department.
13 They are awesome. They get to us as fast as they can.
14 But because where we're located sometimes that takes a
15 little bit longer.

16 With these rail crossings we're going have
17 additional time to wait and our fire department is not
18 equipped with the equipment they would need to be able to
19 get to a derailment if it should happen.

20 If you have driven by our farm land currently a
21 lot of it, as you may know, farmers, has some standing
22 water in it. To get emergency vehicles out there to
23 handle a derailment, I'm not exactly sure how that would
24 happen. So we're going to be dumping dangerous chemicals
25 into our water supply and exposing our kids who are just

1 less than a mile down the road in my school district.

2 My ask to you is please do not run the train
3 through the middle of my school district cutting my
4 schools off from the others. That is my ask to you
5 tonight.

6 MR. ROBERT MARTIN: Robert Martin. M-a-r-t-i-n.
7 Yesterday you gave me the opportunity to speak early
8 because I had a commitment with kids at school. I have
9 been a School Board member for twenty-five years.

10 Today I was giving tours on our farm to two
11 preschools from Valparaiso. And as I was touring I said
12 to them, to that direction less than a mile from where we
13 were they are going to be possibly two to six railroad
14 tracks. And to my west within a mile of this distance
15 Valparaiso laid their wells last year. I wasn't real
16 happy about that. But nobody has mentioned to you that
17 that aquifer is now dependent upon what happens here.

18 The reason they chose our location to go is
19 because the water drains underground from the LaPorte
20 area towards Valparaiso. So if there is a spill, if
21 anything happens and that aquifer is contaminated, it's
22 going to get into the Valparaiso city water.

23 Now, I've had a history of not being on the best
24 terms with Valparaiso. In this case, all right, I am
25 speaking on their behalf.

1 Also on our farm lays Crooked Creek which is a
2 trout stream protected by the DNR. Again, if the water
3 spills that's where, if there's a chemical spill that's
4 where it's going to go.

5 And the third thing, yesterday I spoke to you
6 concerning my concern about the kids at Morgan Township.
7 Today I'm speaking on three different issues, two of them
8 already. The third one is, nobody has done the math.

9 When I was a young farmer at the age of whatever,
10 I won't even tell you, in 1970, my dad told me in the
11 fall my time was worth over \$200 hour. In 1970. In the
12 fall. Because the decisions you make in the fall and the
13 spring are very important.

14 If you set railroad tracks across farm country and
15 affect us, making us wait to get to our fields, do the
16 math. \$200 an hour in 1970. Do the inflation. It's a
17 lot more than that today.

18 And the fourth thing I would say to you is, I
19 appreciate that you toured the Counties today. And I was
20 going to give you an invite. You can come spend the
21 night at our house and I'll tour you again tomorrow.

22 MS. ZIEMKE: So Robert is the last person we had
23 signed up to speak today or tonight. Is there anyone
24 else in the audience who would like to come up?

25 (Audience Response.)

1 MS. ZIEMKE: Go ahead. Anyone else who is
2 interested in coming up. I will ask again once we get a
3 few people up here.

4 MS. DIANA SUBKOWIAK: My name is Diana Subkowiak.
5 D-i-a-n-a. S-u-b-k-o-w-i-a-k. I'm not going to bore you
6 with things that have already been said. But there is
7 something that hasn't been mentioned. There is a prison
8 in Westville that this train will be running by very
9 closely.

10 I worked in the prison for a lot of years. And
11 you rely on radios. Your radio is your safety net. If
12 this train goes through when that horn blows, you will
13 not hear anything on the radio. So if there's inmates
14 that are beating you up or have decided to escape, you
15 have no way to contact anybody to come help you. So it's
16 a major safety issue.

17 They blow the horn when count clears. That's how
18 you know everyone is counted for. They also let you know
19 if there's an escape. Which means lock your doors and
20 collect your children. If this train goes through you
21 won't be able to have that immediate response of knowing
22 that there was a problem at the prison. It will
23 definitely create a safety hazard for the community.

24 Another point I'd like to address is I have a
25 mother-in-law that we look after. And right now it takes

1 me ten minutes to get to her house. If this train goes
2 in, no matter which way I go, I will have to cross these
3 train tracks twice which will turn my ten-minute trip
4 into a thirty to forty-minute trip. And as we all know
5 time saves lives. Thank you.

6 MR. RON MEYERS: My name is Ron Meyers. R-o-n.
7 M-e-y-e-r-s. And it was brought up to possibly run this
8 train along the CSX. I oppose this. I also oppose the
9 other route because it ties up Westville as many people
10 said. My dad lived along the Wabash. I know it's wet
11 ground.

12 But along the CSX, there are fifteen irrigators
13 along that path going from the CSX all the way up to old
14 grand trunk. Of those we actually farm four of them.
15 And we have two wells real close to that irrigator. I
16 don't know how you are going to run a train over it. But
17 all this ground does have specialty crops in it as Mark
18 talked about earlier. And I talked to my representative
19 this morning. He had raised specialty crops all around
20 the country. He said this area right here in LaPorte
21 County is the best area. We've got a great aquifer. And
22 this area we don't have rocks. He said other places have
23 good areas but they have rocks and other problems that
24 get in the way of them.

25 If you go on the south side of it there's three

1 irrigators along there. We also have one of those
2 ourselves. Eventually you are going to have to cross
3 back to the north side and run into the town of Union
4 Mills. That's all I have. Thank you very much.

5 MS. NICOLE MARKOVICH: My name is Nicole
6 Markovich. N-i-c-o-l-e. M-a-r-k-o-v-i-c-h. This past
7 week I went over a couple things. I'm a registered nurse
8 at St. Mary's Medical Center in Hobart, Indiana. And I'm
9 also on the Town Council in Kouts, Indiana.

10 I was raised in Portage and Valparaiso. When I
11 came to a rural town I was kind of adopted, I would say,
12 in the first couple years I was there. You guys have a
13 different heart than city people do. And with that
14 there's a lot of heart in people's land. Farmers do not
15 want to lose their land. They take that, the
16 compensation they receive has all been in the strategic
17 plan.

18 In the past week I went over the Great Lakes Basin
19 Rail Line. And I looked at some strategic planning on
20 your end. And to put in a 287 mile railroad, it does
21 benefit the larger communities. Rural towns want to stay
22 rural for a reason. A lot of times with that they want
23 to keep what they already have here the way it is.

24 I would like to also say, was there a strategic
25 plan, was there some type of research and statistics

1 looked into to find out are we using our railroads
2 efficiently? The ones that are already in place.

3 MR. DREW BUCHANAN: Drew Buchanan. D-r-e-w
4 B-u-c-h-a-n-a-n. I serve as the vice president on the
5 Planning Commission for the Town of Westville and also
6 Board of Directors for the Chamber of Commerce for the
7 Town of Westville.

8 I would like to ask the Surface Transportation
9 Board to look closely and specifically at the Town of
10 Westville. In looking at the 278 mile proposed rail I
11 don't see an area greater affected than the Town of
12 Westville. The town sits at the junction of the fork.
13 It sits equal distance between LaPorte, Michigan City and
14 Valparaiso.

15 This proposal not only divides the town once but
16 multiple times in effect trapping the town and cutting
17 off any potential growth and diminishes our environmental
18 resources.

19 I have two main points of concern. First is the
20 northern fork of the rail which would cross across
21 Highway 421 in an area that the town has been planning
22 and developing for decades. The proposal that's been
23 given out has been drawn on outdated maps showing Highway
24 421 with only two lanes. In recent years the highway has
25 been expanded to actually five lanes. Five lanes wide

1 with a pedestrian trail running north and south along
2 Highway 421.

3 This expansion has brought new business and
4 residents to the town. It connects the town better to
5 Purdue North Central and a new hospital being proposed
6 just north of town.

7 A second area of concern that's been mentioned is
8 the fact the town already has a federal Superfund site
9 called Cam-Or where many acres have been rendered
10 unusable for over two decades. The site has already
11 caused us to restructure our town including moving its
12 water supply.

13 This new proposal will run extremely close to the
14 new water supply of the Town of Westville. The town has
15 seen significant prosperity for many years. This
16 proposal has the potential to remove any of that and
17 remove future growth and development.

18 MS. MIRANDA SERLETIC: Miranda Serletic.
19 M-i-r-a-n-d-a. S-e-r-l-e-t-i-c. I'm from Porter County,
20 Porter Township, near Boone Grove. And I have the same
21 concerns that most of us have like destruction of farm
22 property, safety, and drainage, just to name a few.

23 However, I'm more concerned with what seems to be
24 the initial plan to basically take our rural farm lands
25 and make them like those in northern Lake County. We all

1 know this would be devastating to our environment and
2 would totally change our way of life.

3 According to the Great Lakes Basin website they
4 chose this proposed route to bypass population centers,
5 have the capacity for future growth, support agricultural
6 and industry around the route, avoid attracting more
7 residences or businesses along the railroad that would
8 limit expansion or be exposed in case of an incident.

9 The website goes on to explain that the process
10 would be built on a 200-foot wide right-of-way, a
11 designated 50-foot utility corridor along with access to
12 points of interchange. These will be used by utilities
13 as a new right-of-way putting money in the pockets of
14 GLB.

15 Property owners who sell their lands to the GLB
16 would be provided free electricity and adjacent property
17 owners will be granted access to the railroad. So it
18 seems that the electricity will be carried by big
19 overhead power lines along the railway. With gas lines
20 already in place this would be perfect for Chicago money
21 industries to turn our farm lands and natural areas into
22 industrial areas for big profit.

23 So if you connect the dots you can see there's a
24 bigger plan than just running a seventy-mile-per-hour
25 train through rural America. It would be the ultimate

1 destruction for farm land that helps feed America and the
2 world.

3 Additionally this area used to be the Grand
4 Kankakee Marsh a/k/a the Everglades of the North, part of
5 a million acre wetland full of lush vegetation and the
6 highest concentrations of wildlife on earth until man
7 came through, drained the marsh and straightened the
8 Kankakee River in the name of progress. Hence the
9 underlying problems of why we have so many drainage
10 issues. And it will only get worse with the railway.

11 Now only about 5 percent of the marsh remains.
12 The Jerry Allen Marsh near Boone Grove is approximately a
13 quarter mile from the proposed railway. The introduction
14 of this railway in such close proximity would disrupt the
15 ecosystem of the marsh, to say the least.

16 Let's not allow history to repeat itself by
17 allowing the Great Lakes Basin Railway to construct its
18 bypass and destroy prime farm lands and destroy what's
19 left of the Grand Kankakee Marsh. Thank you.

20 MS. JAMIE ERDMANN: Good evening. My name is
21 Jamie Erdmann. J-a-m-i-e. E-r-d-m-a-n-n. I have
22 property approximately three miles north of the Pinola
23 area. And that would be affected here.

24 In 2012, DOT Secretary Foxx in an open letter to
25 the American, to the Association of American Railroads

1 enumerated a number of voluntary commitments to improve
2 safety initiatives. I will not read the entire lengthy
3 list but of interest it puts the onus of emergency
4 response on the railroad industry.

5 And one of those commitments talks about an
6 inventory to be conducted of emergency response
7 facilities and equipment. I would like to respectfully
8 ask that the Board consider for mitigation a commitment
9 to environmental development, that piece. And also
10 perhaps to look at high impact/low probability insurance
11 as a requirement for emergency response.

12 And also to take a look at requiring the railroad,
13 if this should go through, to have under contract a
14 emergency response clean-up personnel under contract and
15 ready to respond in an unfortunate incident. I would
16 like to leave the document with you for your review.
17 Thank you.

18 MR. BOB HARRISON: Bob Harrison. H-a-r-r-i-s-o-n.
19 I had a question, but you said I couldn't ask it. My
20 question, I'm going to ask it anyway, what if they don't
21 want to sell? That's my question. Because eminent
22 domain does not fall here. Look at Kelo v. The City of
23 New London, Connecticut. They passed a law for public
24 use. It's the only way it can happen. This is not for
25 public use. It's in the books. So that's all I got to

1 say.

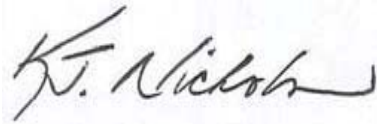
2 MS. ZIEMKE: All right. We really appreciate
3 everyone coming out tonight. And thank you to those of
4 you who gave oral comments. For those of you who did not
5 give oral comment or if you gave oral comments and you
6 have more, please submit them either on-line or you can
7 mail them in. Look at your brochure. All the
8 information you need is there. And note that is extended
9 to June 15th. Thank you.

10 (Meeting concluded at 8:02 p.m.)
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CERTIFICATE

I, Kristin J. Nichols, CSR, RPR, a Notary Public within and for the County of Porter and State of Indiana, do hereby certify the foregoing pages were reported by me and they comprise a full, true and correct transcript of the Public Scoping Meeting for the EIS on the Great Lakes Basin Rail Line, taken on April 13, 2016.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my Notarial seal this 27th day of April, A.D. 2016.



Kristin J. Nichols, CSR, RPR
Notary Public, State of Indiana
Residence: Porter County
My Commission Expires: 8-29-23

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