

Comments for STB Public Scoping Meeting for GLB

My name is Brad Temple and I live and farm near the proposed route from mileposts 130-140. In that short 10 miles of track the line will cross the Fox River and Indian Creek valleys that are heavily wooded, requiring ~~a lot of~~ clearing of mature trees and native plants to build bridges for crossings. It is also an area where thousands of people come every year to canoe the fox river enjoying the tranquil, rural surroundings.

On both sides of these valleys are flat, rich farm fields; drained by field tile to make them extremely productive for crop production. I do not consider this land green space, or undeveloped as some say. According to the 2012 AG Census, LaSalle county ranked 5th in the nation for acres of corn production. This land is our families lively hoods and our rural communities' economic engines. Agriculture contributes nearly \$460 million to LaSalle county. While this proposal doesn't go thru my farm, it will have a dramatic effect. Because when the drainage tile is crushed, broken or cut off, our farms become water soaked sponges hampering our ability of raising crops. In Great Lakes Basin's own narrative on page 13, they readily admit that after a rainfall, water may be present in, and adjacent to the right of way. The railroad bed will act like a dam, altering the natural drainage flow. If a drainage tile is cut or broken, it not only affects the immediate land owner, but it is likely that a tile line can continue for a mile or more effecting hundreds of acres, rendering them unproductive for their neighbors farms too. What makes our farmland PRIME, is our rich soil, with its high organic matter, combined with our ability to properly drain our land. Many of the drainage tile in our area are relatively shallow, some being less than two feet under the surface, and made of clay. Obviously construction equipment and building in this proposed right of way would be devastating to that infrastructure. Essentially having a negative financial impact on every piece of farmground this rail line is near.

For generations ^{we} land owners have allowed right of ways on their land for public infrastructure to help build this country. However the magnitude of this project is unprecedented in recent history and is not a public use. I respectfully urge the STB to conduct a full review of this proposal.