

Mr. Dave Navecky  
Office of Environmental Analysis  
Surface Transportation Board  
395 E. Street SW  
Washington DC 20423-0001

Ms. Lori A. Pepper  
514 Stevens Court  
Sleepy Hollow, IL 60118

Mr. Navecky,

In the last two weeks I was contacted by my farming friends in Boone County, Illinois concerning the Great Lakes Basin Rail Line Project that will dissect the length of Boone County. In reviewing the maps on their website I found that my farm along Pearl Street in southern Boone County would be cut in half by the rail line. This was a danger that I had not foreseen for my property. I work alongside the farmer who rents this acreage to protect the environment in every way we can leaving as little impact on the field as possible. We have conservation easements in place with the local Farm Service Agency to help protect the waterways with filter strips. I inherited this land from my maternal family and it is an integral part of who I am. I grew up on the adjoining farm and returned to help my mother in the last three years of her life there. We often discussed these farms and planned for my son and his wife to one day take on management in the next generation.

The proposed rail line cuts this farm in an uneven diagonal leaving two pieces of land that are much harder to farm, cuts off access to the back half, and goes through conservation easements as well as waterways and a creek. I can only imagine the pollution coming off the one hundred trains proposed to pass daily. My farmer has already told me that they would need to change the way this land is farmed if the train comes through which will likely hurt bushels per acre, and thus, our farm income. Who would want to farm a property divided by a train? How would machinery get to the back of the field over the rail line safely? How will compaction of the acres from rail equipment be mitigated? Will water pool differently on the field once the rail line is built? These are all questions that are being discussed. I am hearing this train will be hauling oil and possibly other chemical agents so derailment is also a fear. This occurred nearby in Galena, IL last year next to a nature preserve and they say it will be decades before it is cleaned up.

Boone County, Illinois is blessed with some of the best soils in the country for agriculture. How can we justify destroying farm after farm along this proposed route? Farm homes, barnyards and livestock pastures lie directly on the proposed lot. I ask you to please consider the damage that will occur in a community based in agriculture if the Great Lakes Basin Rail Line Project were to be built. This is a private corporate venture hoping to make money without taking into consideration the county residents displaced by their plan. Please deny them the right to our land and our way of life.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Lori A. Pepper", followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Lori A. Pepper  
514 Stevens Court  
Sleepy Hollow, IL 60118