

EI-23301



Docket No FD35952

renee ochs

to:

david.navecky

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From: renee ochs <ochsren@gmail.com>

To: david.navecky@stb.dot.gov

May 29, 2016

Dear Mr. Navecky,

We are writing as private citizens and supporters of our agricultural heritage to go on record and attempt to convince you not to support the Great Lakes Basin railroad project.

First and foremost, we believe this project causes a huge negative impact on our environment. We are concerned about our precious soil. This natural resource is very valuable. This food producing soil is some of the best in the world. Let's not put it under a railbed. If this project is approved, the productive use of this soil is gone forever. God can't make any more farmland. We believe the farmland that will be lost in Rock County will total approximately 575 acres. We believe that land conservation and land use planning is being ignored.

Our second concern is the local economic impact. We believe the annual impact of taking this acreage out of production will cost the local economy in excess of \$600,000 per year for each future year. This industry is vital to us! Farm productivity will also be impacted by

- Large fields divided into small sections
- Equipment too big for small fields
- Delays in moving equipment
- Land locked fields
- Maintenance cost of unused portions of easements

Finally, we question the feasibility of the project. Mr. Patton's project information is confidential. He is unwilling to share project details. Because of this lack of disclosure and inconsistency of information, it has made it difficult, if not impossible, to properly vet the project. We don't know a lot, but we do know

- This project does not have rail industry support
- This is venture capital with lots of leverage and risks
- This is a private company that has very little railroad expertise
- If this project fails, we will have a very expensive bike trail with the world's most valuable food producing soil underneath it
- There is inconsistency in the communication from Great Lakes Basin, this inconsistency and lack of details prevents a thorough and comprehensive analysis

We also know that Mr. Patton has proclaimed this project as a legacy for his grandchild. Land owners along this proposed rail line have their own hopes of a legacy for future generations. It simply doesn't seem right for eminent domain to determine which legacy to recognize

Mr. Navecky, there has to be a better alternative. I hope the Surface Transportation Board will say **NO** to this proposed rail line project.

Ron and Renee Ochs
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