

04-17-2017

DR. MR. NAVECKY

I HAVE BEEN ~~THROUGH~~ AROUND RAILROADS
ALL MY LIFE!

I HAVE THE FORTH LARGEST
O-GUAGE LAYOUT IN ROCKFORD, IL

I DONATE TO RAIL SYSTEMS
AND MUSEUMS

BUT THERE ARE SITUATIONS WHERE
RAILROADS ARE NOT NEEDED!

TO TAKE AWAY ALL THAT 6,305
ACRES FROM FAMILIES THAT HAVE
HAD IT FOR 400 OR MORE YEARS
IS WITHOUT ~~ANY~~ ANY LINE OF THINKING

THE REST OF MY COMMENTS ARE
PRINTED ON ~~RECYCLED~~ PAPER ENCLOSED.
ROCKFORD MORNING STAR 04-16-17

RESPECTFULLY

RET. SGT. ~~John~~ J. Luhrs



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★ PROUD SUPPORTER OF THE USO ★

Rail project would be destructive, disruptive

Have you ever heard the aphorism, "If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is?" We have a situation in northern Illinois that fits that adage to a tee. The Great Lakes Basin Railroad wants to run a track from Milton, Wisconsin, to northern Indiana.

The proponents of this program are selling it as if it were going to be a great boon to everyone in the area through which it travels. What many don't realize is the underlying and insidiously destructive and disruptive nature of this track.

This track would run through a major portion of Winnebago County. The rail corridor will be 200 feet wide, and includes a 50-foot-wide area for future use for pipe lines, utility company use or other profit-generating means for the rail line investors.

The length of the corridor has been quoted as being approximately 260 miles. Every mile represents 24.25 acres of land taken from current owners, or approximately 6,305 acres in total. That is land from which farm production will be obliterated.

This plan means filling in wetlands near rivers and impounding water. To achieve the proposed 70-mile-per-hour speed, many roads will have to be terminated at the rail line. Some of our farmland floods frequently, and this will slow receding water and delay field work. Farm fields will be bisected, homes and buildings will have to be moved, and some fields will be too small for present-day equipment to farm.

I understand that farm rail crossings will have to be insured yearly by the farm owner at rates of \$2,500 to \$5,000 per year, which is unjust and burdensome to the farm owners. The western route does not appear to be well researched, as it goes through so many wetlands.

So far, we have addressed the rural problems as they apply to farmers. This is also important to those living in cities and villages. Any derailment of toxic chemicals has the propensity to cause evacuations and/or contamination of the water supply to thousands of citizens. Many people believe the prepon-



DAVE WILLIS

each car contains 30,000 gallons.

A derailment usually involves many more than one ruptured tank car and the remedy is to let the oil burn. Not only are there toxic fumes from this, but also a ground and/or a ground water contamination that lasts for many years. If chlorine gas is being transported and is involved in a derailment, evacuations of five to six miles are required. Even Rockford Memorial Hospital could potentially have to be evacuated. Large portions of Rockford and towns to the north also would be affected.

By what justification can billionaire investors be granted approval by our federal government for this privately owned rail line that usurps land owned for generations of families, and creates financial and emotional hardship for them? As I understand eminent domain, it is to be used solely for creating public thoroughfares like roads, etc. It is not designed for, nor is it to be used, to promote the interests of private enterprise operations.

There is a perception among many, that this rail project is dead because resolutions against it have been passed by various townships and the Winnebago County Board. This couldn't be further from the truth.

The authority having the final say on this project is the Surface Transportation Board in Washington, D.C. Property owners and concerned citizens need to provide written comments to this board. If you too are concerned about this pil-laging of our land, please send your comments to www.stb.dot.gov/EctI/ecorrespondence.nsf/incoming?OpenForm, or mail to: Dave Navecky, Surface Transportation Board, Docket No. FD 35952, 395 E Street SW, Washington, D.C. 20423-0001. Please act quickly, as time is of the essence.

Dave Willis is in Rockford

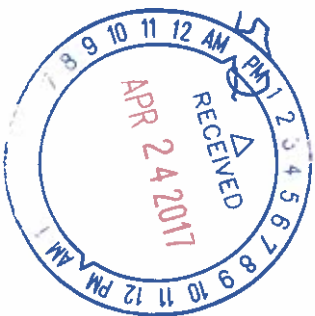
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