

My wife and I own and operate a 3000 hd. hog farm located on Mowers rd in Esmond. The current proposed route of the railroad runs within 300 ft. of our house and 200 feet of our hog barns. It crosses Mowers and a drainage ditch exactly where our flood plain and road ditches drain surface water into the drainage ditch. This is an area that receives millions of gallons of runoff during spring thaw and heavy rains. Currently, our house and barns are unaffected but, I have seen standing water within 30 feet of our house and less than 20 feet from our hog barns. Any choking of the drainages here could potentially flood house, barns, and deep pit manure storages under our barns. If flooding is severe enough it could overflow the pits resulting in mixed manure and surface waters which would first contaminate our local ditch, then the Rock river and ultimately the mississippi. That, in itself is a recipe for an EPA nightmare.

My second point is animal welfare. Hogs by nature run when they hear loud noises. They perceive these to be some kind of threat. The louder the noise the more hogs run away. Usually packing up against the opposite wall until they settle down. This behavior can cause lameness issues. And when really scared, they have been known to crush pigs unfortunate enough to be at the bottom of the pile. I generally try to move through barns slowly to give them a chance to see me and not be startled into running. I believe trains running within close proximity to our barns would aggravate this behavior resulting in more lameness, lower rate of gain, and higher mortality rates.

The compounding of these issues may put us out of business. I really can't see us moving and rebuilding elsewhere. We don't have those kinds of funds.

Thank you.