

Milton Middle School

20 East Madison Avenue
Milton, WI 53563
Skylar McBride
Milton Middle School

Dave Navecky
Surface Transportation Board
Docket No. FD 35952
395 E Street SW
Washington, DC 20423-0001

April 27, 2016

Dear Dave Nevecky,

Hi, my name is Skylar McBride. I'm a seventh grader at Milton Middle School and I oppose the railroad going through. Now, I know that you will probably receive a thousand letters just like mine, but I want you think while you are reading this, I am a kid. This train is going to strongly affect my generation. Now, just because I'm a kid, I want you to actually listen to me. I care about this train just as much as an adult would.

One of the topics spoken on was money. This is all the railroad is about, MONEY, MONEY, MONEY! But, that's just the train owners making money. Sure, the farmers will get paid for their land at first, but what about after that? They are losing the land, which is how they make money! What will happen to the farmers and their families when the money runs out? What will the farmers do when they need the land to make their money? They will have no land to grow crops on and no way to make a proper income for their family. It won't just be a town of farmers that gets affected, but that is less food sitting in the grocery store for everyone to eat. That food doesn't just appear in the grocery store. That food is produced by a hardworking farmer. If you want to build a railroad, so be it. Just know that it is a farmers way of life you are taking away.

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Another thing talked about during a scoping meeting in Janesville was a decrease in property value, yet higher land taxes to pay for the railroad. We may not be a "rich" farming community, but farming is what we make our money off of. It's a way of life. We are a small rural town, and I would like it to stay that way. Just think to yourself, "Would you want a train in your backyard?"

People think that farming is easy. It's not, but if a farmer's land is cut up into small pieces, it makes the job longer and harder. "Ultimately, Patton says it's not about cutting up a farmer's land, but finding a way to make the project move full-steam ahead." This is according to WKOW 27 news. This brings me to think, why does this train need to go through in the first place? Well, during the scoping meeting, it was said to decrease train congestion in Chicago. Well, why don't you build more train tracks in Chicago? As Frank Patton said in the quote above, it's not about cutting up farmer's land. Well, like it or not, that's exactly what you're doing! In total, around 575 acres of prime farmland will be lost. Those farmers need their land to make an income. Now, 575 acres may not seem like a lot to you but it is to us. Corn is going for around \$4.80 per bushel. One whole acre of land can produce around 100 bushels of corn. So, \$4.80 times 100 is \$480! That is a lot of money, now let's times that by 575. That is \$276,000! That is a lot of money! But, 575 acres of land will be gone, taking \$276,000 out of a farmer's income. So, if you ever have a chance to talk to Mr. Patton, would you ask him what is this railroad all about anyway? Also, is taking a little longer in Chicago worth the income farmers will be losing?

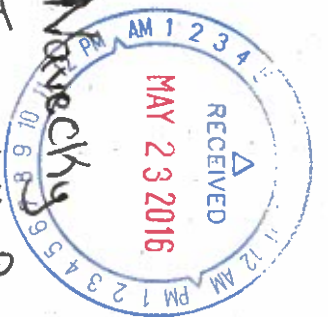
Last, but definitely not least, the destruction of wildlife habitat. I have always been fascinated by animals. I'm a hunter, but I know about balance. Everything has to be in balance with each other. I feel strongly about the way animals are treated, but also the way their habitat is. The animals don't just need their habitat, so do we! The trees filter the air we breathe. Which brings another thing to mind, how much air and water pollution will this new train cause? The land is everlasting, as long as we take care of it, but once it is all destroyed, it's gone for a while. Trees take a long time to grow, they don't spring up overnight. I would like to grow up with trees and plants and fresh air and green grass! Even better, if I have kids of my own someday, I would like them to have trees and wild animals and fresh air and green grass. So, if a train goes through a habitat rich in animal life, what do you think will happen to that balance?

Sincerely,

Skylar McBride

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