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Attention: Surface Transportation Board

Regarding: Great Lakes Basin Transportation, Inc. Docket #: FD35952

My name is Mike Hertz and I am a third generation farmer in Western Kankakee County Illinois. The proposed GLB rail and now highway runs directly north of 80 acres that I own with my father Owen Hertz since 1985. This project will cut off all of my drainage as we have tiles that run to the Granary Creek in Essex Township. The creek is north of the proposed rail, thus the rail will cutoff my access to the creek

Without this drainage our farm will constantly flood making it completely unusable for farming purposes. In addition, the township road 1500 that borders the north side of our farm will on occasion be washed out creating dangerous driving conditions on this road. I am concerned that Essex Township would not have the funds necessary to maintain this road as it will be chronically washed out. This road is well traveled including school buses, mail delivery, as well as general traffic.

The environmental issues created by this project are not being addressed. There has been no assurances given that they will repair and maintain all drainage tiles and provide outlets to allow for the natural flow of surface water. If this project is allowed to act like a dam not only will fields, homes, wildlife, and roads be flooded, but the project itself may quite well be adversely affected. Flood waters could undermine the structural integrity of the rails. Imagine 100 cars of oil derailing due to flood waters on the track or undermining the track. In my lifetime there have been several times that heavy rains created floods that have nearly washed the 1500 road out. Should the project be approved, I am concerned that these flood conditions will be more frequent and more damaging. What recourse would we all have against these folks should these damages occur?

Our rural schools, fire departments and ambulances will certainly be adversely affected by this proposal. Many students of the Herscher School system will live north of the project while the school is south of the project. These students cross one rail line already to get to school.

The Essex fire and rescue department covers much of the area south of the project. Since they are north of it, it is very feasible that they will be delayed in responding to a fire, accident or illness that may occur south of the project. Will there be crossing provided at every existing road with lights and crossing arms?

The information provided by GLB state they will pay \$20,000 per acre for the land that the rails and highway sit on. First I question how they determined that \$20,000 is fair compensation given that bare farm land in this area can command over \$11,000 per acre. If this proposal is approved this land now becomes commercial property that should be bought by the square foot and not by the acre. Not to mention that the value of the farms will be reduced as farms will be split making them less efficient. Will there be crossings provided to the landowners to access their farms that are split by the rail and highway? What about the value of the homes that will now have rails and possibly a highway just feet from it? Why should a private group be able to determine the fair value of the property and then be able to personally profit from it? Maybe a fairer compensation would be the opportunity to own stock in

the proposed company so that those of us who have to actually live and tolerate this project could at least look forward to an annual compensation in addition to being compensated fairly on the initial purchase.

Finally I question the actual need for this rail. I have yet to see any existing railroad companies endorse this project and pledge to actually use it. Absolutely nothing that I have seen states that any railroad has agreed to pay the toll to use this rail. If this project is being built on pure speculation, what contingencies are being made if the project goes bankrupt? Where will the funds come from to decommission the rails if they are no longer going to be used?

The latest figure I saw was that they want the project to be 2000 feet wide. This is a huge area to take out of production agriculture, displace people's homes, and generally create an uncomfortable environment without some advance studies showing an absolute need for the project. If the only rationalization is to avoid some congestion in the Chicago area, I really question the validity of this project. Maybe some upgrades to those existing rails would be more appropriate and less intrusive than the proposed project.

I appreciate the opportunity to address my concerns with the board. I ask that you fairly consider this project and the effects both positive and negative it will have. I am not a person that would stand in the way of progress that would benefit the majority. But this proposal in my estimation will only truly provide long-term benefits to investors at the expense of those of us who live here.

Thank You

Michael W. Hertz

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