

My concerns to you today relate to the loss of local industry, farming, and its production facilities, our farm land.

If this rail were to be built and would be as successful as Mr Patton proclaims it could be, we are looking at industries “springing” up along the rail, providing jobs and bringing prosperity to our area.

That sounds wonderful at first glance but let’s look a little closer

- * Industries requiring rail are not small industries, they would have to be big enough to make it cost effective to build their own connecting rail and siding, a considerable investment. Both the physical space for the new industry and the necessary rail will require more destruction of farmland, our food production facility, a non- renewable resource.
- * Industries need employees, employees need housing. Subdivisions and housing developments need roads. All of this will require more destruction of farmland, our food production facility, a non-renewable resource.
- * More people means more services required. Schools, libraries, medical facilities, shops all of this will require yet more destruction of farmland, our food production facility, a non renewable resource.

Those of us in rural townships are not opposed to growth and realize that growth is necessary to be a vibrant community. We look for growth in areas that will leave our farmland, our production facility mostly intact, doing what it does best, growing food.

The benefits that Mr Patton speaks of will mean a continuous nibble at valuable farmland, a non-renewable resource.

According to American Farmland Trust, 50 acres of farm and ranch land are developed every hour in the US. Between 1982 and 2010 the US developed more than 24 million acres of agricultural land - an area the size of the states of Indiana and Rhode Island combined.

Many rural townships had the foresight to put zoning regulations in place to protect against the kind of development that is being proposed. Zoning that protects against the destruction of a non-renewable resource.

Great Lakes Basin Transportation is a private, for profit company. They are dependent on their investors and therefore dependent on financial market fluctuations

The company has no proven track record **of any kind**

No Class I railroads have publicly stated they will use the proposed rail line

In other words; **this project is highly speculative.**

Therefore I respectfully request that the short and long term as well as the cumulative effects of the Great Lakes Basin Project are analyzed in depth in the EIS in the following areas .

1. the destruction of prime farm land for the GLB project as well as the potential development of prime farm land along the rail corridor.
2. the permanent degradation of our human environment
3. the socio/economic impact on rural communities and farmers

I request that during this analysis you weigh out the permanent destruction of a non-renewable resource against the effects of getting mostly non-perishable goods to market a little faster.

I also request that you consider the considerable loss rural communities and individuals might face if this highly speculative project fails during or after construction.

The National Environmental Policy Act has tasked all of us to preserve our environment for future generations. Preservation of the land that feeds us should be one of our primary concerns.

Mirjam Melin
8608 East Rye Drive
Clinton, WI 53525