

April 20, 2016

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

Dear Mr. Navecky:

I am writing to you to about the GLB Rail Project slated for construction and passage through Rock County, Wisconsin. As an area farmland owner, homeowner, and farm loan officer for an area community bank, I have the following questions and concerns.

1. Who are the vested GLB rail stakeholders, including those who will use the rail? Thus far, none of them have come forward to talk to the individuals who own the land they wish to buy (or claim via eminent domain) nor the communities who will be impacted by the project. It appears 'big business' can throw a project idea out into the 'wind' and hope it lands and takes root somehow, potentially going unnoticed by the general public.
2. How will landowners and mortgagees (banks who finance farmers) retain and obtain (in the future) legal access to fragmented parcels created by the rail line in which the land fragments are landlocked by neighboring landowners? Fewer acres and fragmented landlocked acres reduce the borrowing power of farm businesses. In addition, remaining farmland and homes will incur devaluation, given their geographic proximity to the rail line, the resulting irregular parcel shapes and sizes, and change in traffic flow on area roads.
3. How will farmers, earning their livelihood from the land, continue to prosper without the economies of scope and scale by having to make do with less land and managing land parcel fragments which are inefficient to the overall farming operation, including impediments in movement of cattle, equipment, harvested crops, crop inputs, etc.?
4. What is the severance agreement for the rail line if at some point down the road it is no longer used or needed or is economically not feasible to operate? Unlike a big box store, an abandoned livestock barn, or empty factory, this mammoth of a transportation freeway will absorb thousands of acres of land that could sit unused for decades should the rail line go idle. Attempting to reclaim the land by ripping out the rail line at a later date will NEVER restore the fragile soils to their original fertile state.

5. Who will reimburse the township and county municipalities for the additional costs of supporting maintenance of new bridges, roads, and other rail-related fixtures, increased fire and EMS services, environmental expertise, and other services necessary to support the community's infrastructure located around the railroad infrastructure? It's usually easier to build a capital improvement/infrastructure in one shot than to commit to properly maintaining/upgrading it for the next 50 years.

Please take all time that is needed to research and respond to these questions and concerns, along with those registered by others in our community. This project proposal requires a LONG-TERM commitment by many, many stakeholders located across the Midwest and one that will forever change our economic, environmental, social, agricultural, and rural landscape. Thank you for listening.

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