



SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
Washington, DC 20423

Office of Environmental Analysis

December 13, 2016

Mr. Frank Patton
Great Lakes Basin Transportation, Inc.
23860 State Line Road
Crete, Illinois 60417

RE: FD No. 35952, Great Lakes Basin Transportation, Inc.—Construction and Operation—in Wisconsin, Illinois, and Indiana; Response to GLBT's request to suspend NEPA review

Dear Mr. Patton:

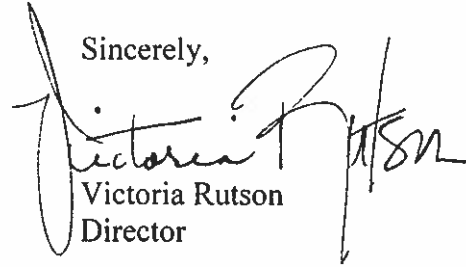
I am writing in response to your letter dated December 1, 2016 requesting that the Surface Transportation Board's Office of Environmental Analysis (OEA) suspend its on-going environmental review under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to allow Great Lakes Basin Railroad time to complete its application to the Board seeking construction and operation authority for a new rail line. In your letter, you state that the information in GLBT's application will assist OEA with its NEPA review.

The application likely will provide information that will help the accuracy of OEA's NEPA review. I must note, however, that stopping and starting the NEPA review process often adds time and expense to the process and increases the burden on all stakeholders. Nevertheless, I will grant your request for suspension of the NEPA review. To ensure that the suspension does not become unduly lengthy, I ask that you submit a status update to me on February 28, 2017, on the application and, if relevant, any other factors that may delay resumption of the Board's NEPA process.

Once GLBT files its application with the Board, OEA will resume work on determining a range of reasonable and feasible alternatives to be addressed in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). We will prepare a brief alternatives document for public review and comment and may have additional public scoping meetings, if warranted. Following public comment on the alternatives document, we will issue the Final Scope of Study for the EIS and begin preparing the Draft EIS. Because the environmental review process is now on hold, these next steps must await receipt of your application.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call or email me or Mr. Kenneth Blodgett at Kenneth.Blodgett@stb.gov or (202) 245-0305.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Victoria Rutson". The signature is stylized with a large, looped "V" and a long, sweeping "R".

Victoria Rutson
Director

cc: Jay Johnson
Kathryn Floyd