

Environmental comment to STB

Docket # 35952

Attention: Victoria Rutson and Dave Navecky

On February 28, 2017 Frank Patton and the Great Lakes Basin Transportation LLC requested another extension, until April 30, 2017, before they are prepared to submit their completed application along with other details requested by the STB before the Environmental study will be reopened. We feel that if the extension is granted it will be a gross injustice to all of the people whose lives are on hold waiting for this process to end. These families, family farms, business people and others are suffering unnecessary stress as they wait to learn if the lives and livelihoods will be destroyed by having their land taken for a rail line that would be a disaster for the 260 mile proposed route and the surrounding areas. The application should not have been waived initially and this process never should have been started without it.

We have already listed numerous environmental hazards that would be impacted by a decision to go forward. Those facts are on record with the STB and can't be emphasized too much, but now with CSX moving forward with a 200 acre rail yard just outside of Crete, Illinois in Will County there is no reason for the GLBT to be approved.

CSX will be transferring trucks to rail and rail to trucks in the proposed rail yard. They will be connecting this rail yard to their own rail line and with all of the improvements in rail traffic flow through Chicago and the surrounding areas by the Chicago Regional Environmental and Transportation Efficiency program (CREATE) traffic flow is greatly improved.

With the investment in the new CSX rail yard it emphasizes the fact that CSX will not sign on to use the proposed GLBT bypass toll rail line, neither will the Norfolk Southern nor Union Pacific. They are investing in their own rail systems. CSX also built a siding along their rail road line in Lake County, Indiana beside Monon Road between the towns of Lowell and Shelby Indiana to improve rail flow on that north south line.

With the Dakota Access Pipeline project going forward along with the Keystone XL Pipeline, the highly volatile Bakken Crude oil will flow far more safely through those pipelines to the gulf to refineries or ships to be transported around the country and the world. The need for this crude oil to be transported by rail on "Bomb" trains through the Midwest doesn't exist. Transporting this volatile oil by rail continues to be disasters that are destroying our environment.

In 2016 there were 8 train derailments in the United States and already in 2017 there have been 3. Not all of those accidents were trains traveling at high speeds like the proposed GLBT rail line that plans to see 110 trains per 24 hours at speeds up to 70 miles per hour. If that occurs, farmers and other motorists will lose their lives trying to drive over their crossing. Farmers with very large equipment are forced to travel slowly over rail crossings so the dangers are greater for them than an automobile that is far shorter and faster.

For these and so many other reasons the STB needs to deny the GLBT permits and deny the extension requested by Frank Patton and the GLBT.

Patricia Mussman

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