

June 13, 2016

Miranda & Richard Serletic
371 West 400 South
Valparaiso, IN 46385

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

Dear Mr. Navecky,

We are opposed to the Great Lakes Basin Railway (GLB) for the various reasons outlined in this document. The proposed GLB is set to run through what was once known as the Grand Kankakee Marsh aka The Everglades of the North until man came through in the name of progress and began draining it. Our property is located in Porter Township in Porter County and will be approximately one-quarter (1/4) mile from the proposed railway route.

TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS

The Great Lakes Basin Railway (GLB) would significantly impact the public roadways in all states and counties where the GLB is proposed to be constructed. The construction of the railroad itself would wreak havoc on the roads as they are now. Most of the county roads are blacktop roads that have trouble withstanding the heavy farm equipment that travel the roads causing huge potholes. With the construction of a railroad, the roads would be damaged by giant construction trucks, semis, pay loaders, backhoes and other heavy equipment. The infrastructure would be quickly destroyed.

SAFETY

Potential road closures and/or delays caused by waiting on trains would congest traffic not to mention heed emergency personnel en route to medical emergencies, fires, disasters and other emergencies. The three townships in Porter County that the railroad would run through have a population of 19,211 based on the 2010 Census with Porter Township having the most at 9,367 people. Porter Township has volunteer fire departments and first responders, who would have to drive to the station to get gear and equipment, then to the emergency scene. If there are up to 110 trains a day or approximately, four to five trains an hour, this would definitely delay the response time, thus leading to injuries and even death of the victims.

Additionally, the volunteer firemen are trained in fighting mostly residential area fires but not in large-scale train derailments that may involve chemical spills. Is there a derailment plan? Who is going to provide emergency equipment training and manpower? Imagine if there is a derailment of a train through a muddy cornfield. A firetruck would get stuck immediately!

The number of trains travelling per day across intersections would drastically increase the chance for train versus vehicle accidents and train versus pedestrian accidents. Given that the trains would run basically, between Boone Grove High School and Middle/Elementary schools where many drivers including teenage drivers would have to cross railroad tracks on a daily basis only adds to the risk of injury and death. Besides automobile accidents, there is the potential for bicycle versus train accidents as many of the county roads are bicycle routes. Furthermore, many pedestrians use the county roads for recreation by walking or running. Horseback riding on the county roads and dog-walking are also other ways in which the county roads are utilized. So, now the potential for people, pets and livestock to be killed by a train increases.

The construction of a 278-mile rail line running up to 110 trains a day would absolutely be devastating to the people, animals, communities and natural resources along the line. The decision of allowing the GLB to construct this giant railway would be a mistake that would be nearly impossible to undo. Decisions from more than a century ago forever changed the land; let's not make the same mistake again.

Sincerely,

Miranda & Richard Serletic

Miranda & Richard Serletic
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cc: Congressman Pete Visclosky

Senator Joe Donnelly

Senator Dan Coats

Senator Ed Charbonneau

Representative Ed Soliday

Representative Michael Aylesworth

Governor Mike Pence