

**Emerald Grove Congregational, UCC
8127 Hwy. 14 E, Janesville, WI 53546-9801**

May 6, 2016

Dave Navecky
Environmental Analysis
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street SW
Washington, DC 20123-0001

Docket No. FD-35952

Mr. Navecky,

We are writing to make sure your office is aware of our concerns, the Great Lakes Basin Transportation, Inc. (GLB) railroad, may have on the Emerald Grove Church. According to GLB's maps the rail line will be built immediately to the west of the home next to the Church.

Here are our concerns specific to Emerald Grove Congregational UCC:

- The church has 9 large stained glass memorial windows and we are worried about these fragile windows holding up against the pollution from diesel fuel, dust and especially vibrations of passing trains. Other church property such as our crosses, outdoor chimes, the PA system, organ and the foundation on our old building may also deteriorate more quickly.
- Our church is in a volunteer fire/paramedic area. If there is a derailment or some other toxic spill, they are not equipped to deal with those types of fires, fumes and chemicals. Who pays for spill clean-up or training of these volunteers? Our well water would possibly be fouled and the small farm field behind the church will be un-rentable because it is contaminated.
- The rail is being built for a capacity of 110 trains traveling at 70 mph and up to a mile long. That's one every 13 minutes. Even if it were one an hour, when they pass that close to the church, the noise will be at the very least disruptive to Christian Education classes, choir practices, meetings and make it nearly impossible to conduct a Sunday worship service, funeral, or wedding without interruption.
- One of our great concerns is water. Again, looking at GLB's map, the railroad and Hwy 14 will intersect immediately west of Emerald Grove. Most anyone who has traveled Hwy 14 through Emerald Grove will know how often they have had to watch for high water signs. The water from a heavy storm or spring snow thaw flows from the east through Emerald Grove to the west immediately along the edge of Hwy 14. BUT, this water crosses under Hwy 14, very close to where the railroad will also be crossing. Handling this water is a concern. If the water is impeded from flowing to the west it will back up into Emerald Grove. Our church basement has already been flooded. We fear extensive and expensive water damage to our church, parsonage and septic systems.

- Water back up could also cause erosion, pooling and stagnant water problems with accompanying bugs and odors. Those, along with air pollution, will disrupt our outdoor activities such as Rally Sunday, rummage/bake sale and outdoor worship services.
- This rail line runs through the back of the Emerald Grove Cemetery (concerns for another letter) which is a high hill and comes down quickly to Hwy 14. Since a rail line can only do a certain percentage of grade, a Hwy 14 bridge, to go over the rail line (per GLB), could cut off nearby Emerald Grove Road and thus church access AND make it difficult to turn into the church off Hwy 14. One serious accident and several mailbox take outs have already happened without a bridge. If there is a "tunnel" instead of a bridge we're back to water problems.
- Additionally, the proposed future growth and utilities mentioned, but unexplained in GLB's material, will surely exacerbate the previously mentioned problems.

Please look into this Great Lakes Basin rail line and consider these concerns.

- Finally, our 170 year old congregation is no environmental expert and this is not their full time job. We find it sad that GLB has had years, with experts, to study the environment issues and yet there are only 90 days for us to investigate, be educated, informed and understand the impact of the railroad.

Thank you.

Pastor Michael Ligman

Michael Ligman

Officers of Emerald Grove Congregational UCC:

Moderator – Katie Bier

Katie Bier

Chair of Deacons – Betty Hill

Betty Hill

Chair of Trustees – Andrew Duoss

Andrew K Duoss

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Christian Education – Vicky Duoss & Kathy Schumacher

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ATTENTION: VICKY DUOSS



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