



SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
Washington, DC 20423

EO-2801

Office of Environmental Analysis

June 6, 2016

Ms. Heidi Brown-McCreery
Director
Illinois Historic Preservation Agency
1 Old State Capitol Plaza
Springfield, IL 62701-1507

RE: Initiation of Section 106 Consultation

Docket No. FD 35952, Great Lakes Basin Transportation, Inc. - Authority to Construct and Operate a Rail Line in Indiana, Illinois, and Wisconsin

Dear Ms. Brown-McCreery:

On March 18, 2016, the Surface Transportation Board (Board) began the scoping process under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) evaluating a proposal by Great Lakes Basin Transportation, Inc. (GLBT) to construct and operate a new rail line in Illinois, Indiana and Wisconsin. The Board's Office of Environmental Analysis (OEA) sent your office the Draft Scope of Study for the EIS and requested your comments, ideas, and concerns. OEA appreciates the participation of David Halpin of your staff in our webinar introducing the project on April 7, 2016. Pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), OEA would now like to initiate consultation with your office to determine if the proposed rail line has the potential to affect architectural, archeological, tribal, or other historic properties.

The proposed project would connect with existing Class I railroads (see attached map) and extend approximately 278-miles from a point near La Porte, Indiana, to a point near Milton, Wisconsin. GLBT also proposes as part of the project to construct a terminal for its rail operations near Manteno, Illinois, to provide switching, servicing, and car and locomotive repair to its railroad customers. GLBT has proposed a 200-foot-wide right-of-way, flyovers at railroad crossings, four major river crossings in Illinois (the Illinois, Kankakee, Fox, and Rock rivers), grade-separated crossings of interstate highways and some roadways, at-grade road crossings, and the closure of some rural roads. The proposed rail line would consist mostly of double track and use Centralized Traffic Control signals and Positive Train Control to allow for movements of up to 110 trains per day.

OEA will be defining the Area of Potential Effects (APE) and formulating a proposed approach to NHPA compliance that is appropriate based upon the range of alternatives selected for study and the information we preliminarily gather regarding known historical, architectural, archeological, tribal, or other historic properties that may be in the project area. We will consult with your office on these and other topics as the Section 106 process moves forward. In addition, we will be providing a preliminary list of Section 106 consulting parties under a separate cover for your review and comment and welcome any suggestions you may have regarding consulting parties.

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Additional information on this project is available on the Board's website at stb.dot.gov/stb/environment/key_cases_GreatLakesBasin, and on the project website at greatlakesbasinraileis.com. If you have any questions or would like to discuss the proposal in more detail, please contact Ken Blodgett of my staff at 202-245-0305 (blodgett@stb.dot.gov) or Richard Starzak of ICF International at 213-312-1751 (Richard.Starzak@icfi.com), OEA's third party contractor who is designated to act on behalf of the Board when complying with the Section 106 regulations of NHPA for this proposed project.

Please let us know who on your staff should serve as our primary point of contact. We look forward to consulting with you and your office on this project.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Victoria Rutson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Victoria" and last name "Rutson" clearly distinguishable.

Victoria Rutson
Director
Office of Environmental Analysis

Attachment: Project Area Map

cc: David Halpin, Cultural Resources Manager



- GLB Proposed Alignment
- GLB Proposed Railroad Interchange
- ▨ GLB Proposed Railport
- Interstate Highway
- Highway

GREAT LAKES BASIN RAIL LINE EIS - FD 35952

Project Area

