

Wanted Scoping Mtg
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Hello, my name is Mark Scarborough. My wife, Denise, and I reside in LaCrosse, which is located in the southern part of LaPorte County. We are the third generation to live on my family farm and are currently raising the 4th generation of farmers.

We are here tonight to learn more about the Great Lakes Basin rail line proposal. But we also want to share some of our concerns of the Agricultural impact in Northwest Indiana.

First I want to talk about the impact that Agriculture has in Northwest Indiana, especially LaPorte County.

- LaPorte County is the second largest County in the state of Indiana.
- 54% of LaPorte County is in Production Agriculture.
- Of the 209,291 acres that are being farmed, 139,236 acres of those are irrigated.
 - 66% of the farm land in LaPorte County is irrigated

This brings me to my main discussion point today.

IRRIGATION

- Let's use a nice square 160 acre field for simplicity of this example.
- It costs approximately \$650-1,000 per acres for a center pivot irrigation system
 - The irrigation system alone would be approximately \$70,000
 - Then to drill a well would be approximately \$30,000
 - Generator to run the pivot = \$30,000
 - Project approximately costs \$130,000
- Now the rail road is going to run through this farm.
 - Splitting the farm will definitely mean, having to move the existing pivot to fit a different size field, and possibly buying a new pivot for the other side.
 - It would most likely mean that the field will no longer be square so the irrigation would have to have additional moving pieces added on to it to accommodate point rows or odd corners. These are extremely pricy.
 - This could also cause for an additional another well would have to be drilled.
 - Smaller pivots are not always cost effective and given where the rail would lie it may mean not being able to have irrigation on part of the farm that was once irrigated.
- The irrigation allows us, as farmers, more options of crops outside of corn and soybeans. It allows us to raise specialty crops. Such as:
 - Cucumbers, tomatoes, green beans, mint popcorn, seed corn, sweet corn, pumpkins, and many more.

Another concern about the irrigation is the ownership. Many irrigation systems are not owned by the land owners. The farmer has a lease with the land owner to farm the land, but the farmer pays for the cost of the irrigation system.

- Has the Great Lakes Basin thought about how it would handle the irrigation equipment when not owned by the land owner?



- Irrigators are expensive, but are an essential part of agriculture in LaPorte County.
- In 2013 Agriculture brought \$227 Million dollars of revenue to LaPorte County.
- The loss of irrigation to a farm could result in annual income losses of tens of thousands of dollars per farm.

Another concern is drainage. Farmers and landowners have worked in collaboration with the Soil & Water and drainage board in LaPorte County to mitigate drainage issues.

- The railroad would be cutting through tile and drainage lines.
- It would create barriers in fields not allowing natural drainage to continue.
- I have also worked construction my entire adult life. I have worked on old rail beds and many times the culverts aren't low enough for the current water table.

I am a farmer, landowner, business owner, and father. What I am asking on behalf of Agriculture is for you to realize the true cost of the project for the farmer, not just the land owner. This is impacting not only the land and food we produce food, but our income and livelihood. My dream is to continue to feed the world, and pass my farm onto the next generation. I guarantee every farmer in the room here has a very similar aspiration.

Please look how this rail road will impact the vitality of Agriculture in Northwest Indiana. And when you do, be sure to realize the clothing on your back, fuel in your vehicle, the pencil and paper in your hand, and last meal you ate, all came from a farm. With the great diversity and irrigation in LaPorte County it may have come from right here.

Thank you for your time today.

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