

City of Streator

204 South Bloomington Street • Streator, Illinois 61364-0517 • (815) 672-2517 • Fax (815) 672-7566



April 25, 2016

Dave Navecky
Surface Transportation Board
ATTN: Docket No. FD 35952
395 "E" Street, SW
Washington, DC 20423-0001

Dear Mr. Navecky:

Please include these comments and recommendations as part of the official record of the Surface Transportation Board's evaluation of the Great Lakes Basin Railroad (GLBR) proposal. The contents of this letter reflect the policy position of the Mayor and City Council of the city of Streator, Illinois.

The city of Streator, Illinois agrees that rail traffic in and through Chicago is very congested. This delay is a hindrance to the companies that rely on railroads for the shipment of raw materials and finished goods, and it is a general drag on efforts to make the nation's freight rail system more efficient.

The city of Streator, Illinois also believes that a railroad bypass around the Chicago metro area would provide substantial long-term benefits for the region, and for the nation's freight rail system. However, we do not believe it is necessary to construct an entirely new rail corridor to achieve the stated objectives of the GLBR.

There are numerous under-utilized rail corridors in northern Illinois that could provide most of the corridors Great Lakes Basin Transportation Inc. would need to accomplish their objectives. The attached map illustrates this point; it shows that by using existing rail corridors, the goals of the GLBR can be achieved with minimal construction and acquisition of entirely new rail corridors. There are other distinct advantages to the alternative route suggested by the attached map:

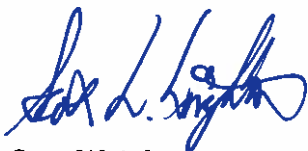
1. It reduces one major river crossing. The GLBR's current proposed route crosses both the Fox and Illinois Rivers. The attached alternative route crosses only the Illinois River and requires no crossing of the Fox River. Furthermore, the alternate Illinois River crossing (west of Ottawa) could be delayed if necessary because there is an existing single-track crossing of the Illinois River on the IR line that could temporarily serve the GLBR.

2. With the exception of the section of BNSF track between Rochelle and Waterman, the existing rail corridors highlighted on the attached map do not currently handle large volumes of trains. Widening the BNSF section between Rochelle and Waterman to accommodate new GLBR traffic is still less disruptive than creating a new rail corridor, if it is necessary.
3. There is very little rail traffic on the existing IR lines, and it has recently been for sale. While this rail corridor would have to be substantially upgraded and widened, such widening and upgrade projects will be cheaper and less disruptive than acquiring and constructing a new virgin rail corridor that cuts across productive farm ground. If GLBR acquires the IR lines, the company would also acquire a feeder line from Aurora.
4. Streator, like several other towns along the attached alternative route, is already a major railroad switching point. These facilities can and should be utilized to support the nation's rail system before resources are spent on constructing new ones created by the proposed GLBR. Streator, Illinois is currently one of the few places where eastbound rail traffic from the BNSF can move to the Norfolk-Southern tracks, and continue east without having to transit through Chicago. This existing crossover point should be incorporated into any Chicago railroad bypass.

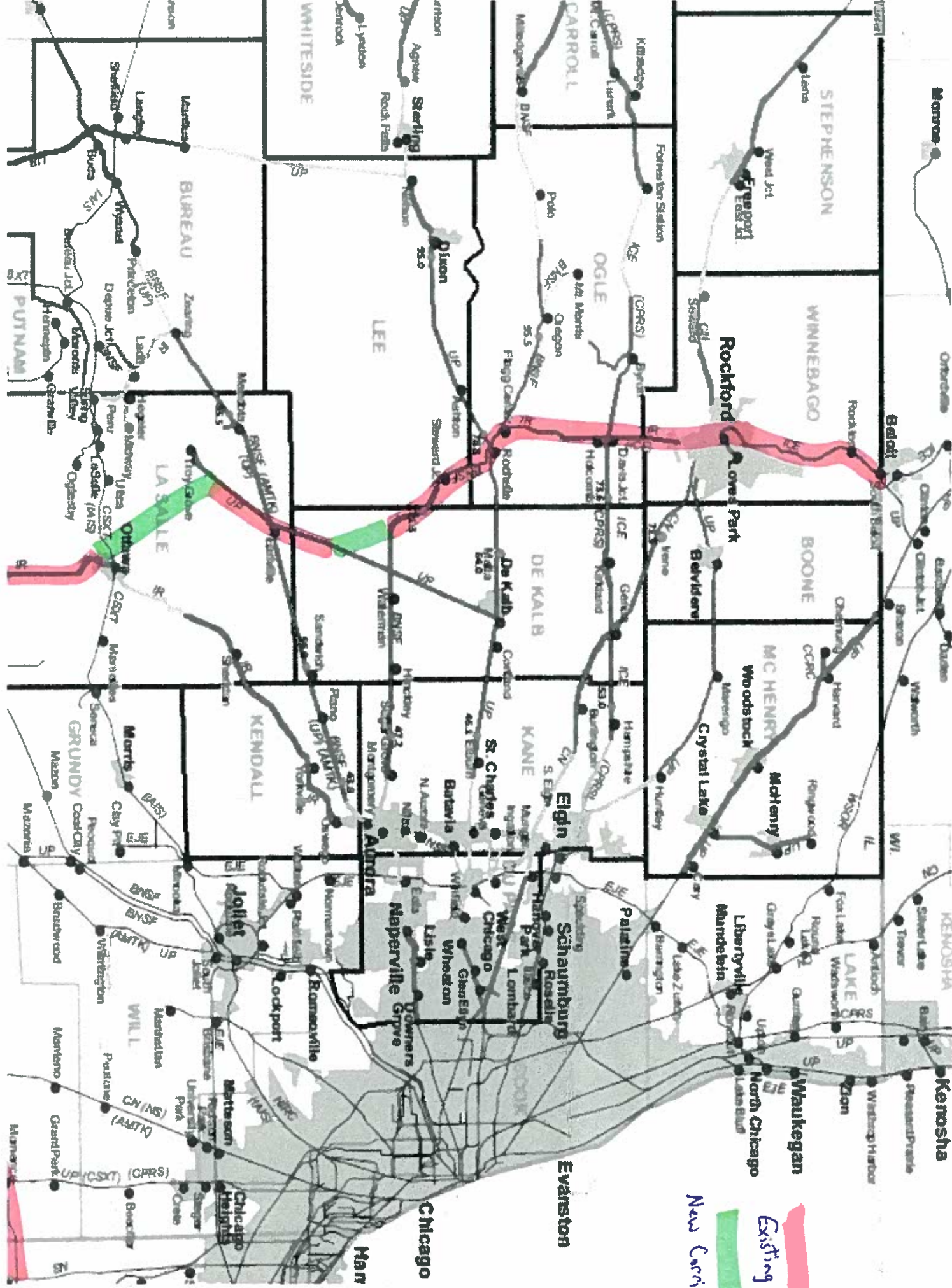
We understand that Great Lakes Basin Transportation Inc. designed their proposed bypass route to **intentionally** avoid going through cities. But we do not think their assumption that all cities will oppose additional rail traffic in their communities is accurate. While railroad bypasses may be required around some cities, by utilizing existing rail corridors, the alternative GLBR route (attached) would be closer to existing cities and thereby provide more convenient transshipping, trans-loading, rail-related manufacturing and other economic development opportunities for the communities along the route.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments to the Surface Transportation Board and we hope they will be useful as government policy is formulated. If you have any questions about the contents of this letter, or would like additional documentation or information from the city of Streator, please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,



Scot Wrighton
City Manager



Existing
New Corridor
New Corridor



Great Lakes Basin Rail Line

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

How Do I Submit Comments?

- **Written Comments:** Complete and submit this form at a public meeting, or mail your comments to the Surface Transportation Board's address at the bottom of this page.
- **Recorded Comments:** Provide your comments to a court reporter at a public meeting.
- **Electronic Comments:** Submit electronic comments by visiting the Surface Transportation Board's website, www.stb.dot.gov, and clicking on the "E-Filing" link and then clicking on "Environmental Comments."

Please refer to Docket No. FD 35952 in all correspondence addressed to the Surface Transportation Board. The comment deadline is June 15, 2016.

SEE ATTACHED LETTER AND MAP

NOTE: When an individual chooses to submit an Environmental Comment or some Other Submissions, his or her personal contact information is considered public information and is shared within and outside of STB without additional authorization.

Scot Wrighton, City Manager

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E-MAIL

Comments may be submitted today or mailed to:

Dave Navecky
Surface Transportation Board
ATTN: Docket No. FD 35952
395 E Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20423-0001

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AFFIX
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HERE

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