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March 28, 2017

Ken Blodgett
Surface Transportation Board
Docket # FD 35952
395 E Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20423-0001

Dear Mr. Blodgett:

The purpose of this letter is to inform you of my absolute opposition to the Great Lakes Basin (GLB) railroad and to request your action to help block it.

There are many reasons for my opposition. First and foremost, the health and safety of me, my family, and my neighbors are at stake. The proposed route cuts directly thru the village in which we reside. Many of us travel to the Rockford or Rochelle areas (each located east of Davis Junction) for work on a daily basis or for frequent errands such as shopping, professional appointments, or routine medical visits. More importantly, when there is an urgent or emergency medical need, Rockford or Rochelle are the primary destinations. Going to either of these cities requires us to travel east from our homes, meaning crossing the proposed GLB tracks each time. Given the proposed frequency of the train traffic, this would pose a serious threat to someone headed to the emergency room if they had to wait for a lengthy train to cross the two main roads we have heading east (Illinois Route 72 and Big Mound Road). I speak from experience. I was taken to Rockford's Swedish American Hospital a few years ago with severe internal bleeding. Getting to the emergency room as quickly as possible was truly a matter of life or death. Imagine one of your loved ones in an ambulance, going to the emergency room where minutes matter, waiting for a train to pass.

On a roadmap, Route 72 and Big Mound Rd. don't appear to be significant travel ways. In this case, however, appearances are very deceiving. Route 72 is highly utilized, not just by residents of Davis Junction. Having a train interrupting traffic on this major route would be, at a minimum, a major headache for the thousands of people that use it every day. Big Mound isn't used as much as Route 72, but it is the primary path taken by hundreds of people every day to go to work, etc., and the secondary road taken when they can't get directly to Route 72 by heading north on Junction Rd. (this issue is explained in the next paragraph).

To make the matter even worse, there is already a major railroad track that dissects the village running east and west. Those of us living south of these tracks that have to travel north knew the risks when we moved here. It is bad enough when there is a train passing through or sitting still, at the crossing through Junction Rd. At least we have an option to bypass the east/west tracks by going south on Junction Rd. to Big Mound Rd., then heading east or west as needed. The GLB path would go through BOTH of the roads we have heading east, including the bypass route on Big Mound.

Besides introducing unacceptable hurdles to reaching emergency medical care in a timely

manner, there are other safety concerns. There are hundreds of children living in the village of Davis Junction. Children are curious. The proposed tracks would be only a half-mile or so away from these children. It's not necessary to explain the safety concerns with this scenario as they are obvious.

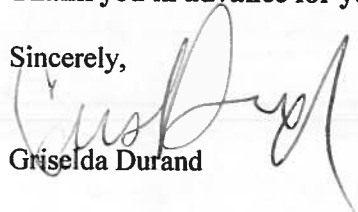
There are also serious concerns with derailment. I understand that the likelihood of derailment is low, however, when it happens it is a disaster, especially with the type of freight that would be carried by trains on this route. With the unusually high frequency of trains that would use these tracks, the probability increases accordingly. I recall vividly the derailment that occurred in Rockford at Mulford Rd. several years ago that killed many people in cars waiting for the train to get by and we don't want that to be a possibility here.

On a general note, we moved to this rural area to live in peace and quiet, not to hear a train chugging by our neighborhood every 11 minutes or so. The noise generated by the trains speeding by our neighborhood will cause significant noise pollution. If they were going through at night, I can't imagine people would enjoy trying to sleep through the nearly constant noise generated by the trains. Additionally, home values will plummet. If economically beneficial in some way (certainly not to us homeowners), certainly the proposed tracks could be routed alongside existing roadways with much less impact to farmers, homeowners, and the roads we all use rather than by the proposed route.

To be clear, I cannot voice strongly enough my opposition to the proposed GLB railroad. I understand there may be economic benefits to some people or corporations. If it is deemed a step forward in the name of progress, let that step be taken on a path that is much less negatively impactful to tens of thousands of people in Ogle and Winnebago counties.

Thank you in advance for your help.

Sincerely,



Griselda Durand