

In The Matter Of:
*Public Scoping Meeting For The EIS On The
Great Lakes Basin Rail Line*

*Valparaiso, IN
April 12, 2016*

*Midwest Reporting, Inc.
1448 Lincoln Way East
South Bend, Indiana 46613*

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PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING FOR THE EIS ON THE
GREAT LAKES BASIN RAIL LINE

Date: Tuesday, April 12, 2016

Time: 10:48 a.m.

Place: Aberdeen Manor Ballroom
216 Ballantrae Street
Valparaiso, Illinois

The proceedings of the above-mentioned and
foregoing matter taken pursuant to notice as to the time
and place.

Before Michelle Soffa, Court Reporter
Notary Public, Porter County, Indiana

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APPEARANCES:

- Dave Navecky, Surface Transportation Board
- Phillis Johnson-Ball, Surface Transportation Board
- Alan Summerville, ICF International
- Laura Ziemke, ICF International
- Tiffany Mendoza, ICF International

1 MS. ZIEMKE: All right. Welcome
2 everyone. Welcome and thank you for
3 coming to the scoping meeting for the
4 Great Lakes Basin Rail environmental
5 impact statement scoping meeting. Before
6 we begin I just want to remind everyone
7 to please turn off your cell phones or
8 turn them to vibrate. Also want to give
9 you a little bit of an understanding of
10 what this portion of the meeting will
11 look like. We're going to have two
12 sections. The first will be a
13 presentation, take about 15 minutes.
14 Following the presentation we will
15 have -- we'll take oral comments and I'll
16 give you a little bit more of the
17 guidelines on the oral comments after the
18 presentation. So with this -- with that
19 I'd like to turn the mic over to Dave
20 Navecky with the Surface Transportation
21 Board.

22 MR. NAVECKY: Thank you everyone for
23 coming to our public scoping meeting on
24 the -- for the EIS for the proposed Great
25 Lakes Basin Rail Line. And it's -- it's

1 great to see such a good turnout for a
2 meeting that we just added officially
3 last week and it definitely shows us that
4 this is a meeting we needed to have. And
5 I thank you -- thank you for coming at
6 the late notice and I know some of you
7 it's probably a burden and a hassle to
8 get here during the day when your -- you
9 have -- have work to do. So thanks again
10 for coming.

11 Next slide, please. So on the
12 agenda for this presentation we'll
13 introduce ourselves, we'll provide you an
14 overview of the Surface Transportation
15 Board and our environmental impact
16 statement process. We'll discuss the
17 purpose and need for the proposed rail
18 line and just a brief description of
19 the -- of the project and we'll go over
20 some resources that are available for --
21 to you on our agency's website and a
22 special project website that we have
23 launched specifically for this
24 environmental review process.

25 So introductions. Again, my name is

1 Dave Navecky, I'm with the Surface
2 Transportation Board in Washington D.C.
3 I'm the lead in the preparation of the
4 environmental impact statement we're
5 gonna be preparing for this project. And
6 we have -- I'll just introduce you here.
7 We have Phillis Johnson-Ball, also for
8 the Surface Transportation Board from our
9 office in Washington. Then we have up at
10 the table Alan Summerville, he's with ICF
11 International. It's a consulting firm
12 that's gonna be helping us prepare this
13 environmental review. It's gonna be a
14 large, complicated, extensive study that
15 we're gonna be doing and we just don't
16 have the capabilities in our small agency
17 to do that. So they are gonna be helping
18 us and working with us and working under
19 our supervision and control in preparing
20 this EIS. There are also nine other
21 folks from ICF in the -- no, seven
22 others, seven others that are here
23 helping coordinate the meeting and answer
24 questions and doing the sign-in and
25 everything else.

1 potential environmental impacts, our
2 agency will then issue a final decision
3 based on that information. They will
4 either deny the project, approve the
5 project or approve the project with
6 conditions, conditions including
7 potential environmental mitigation and
8 conditions mitigating other community
9 impacts.

10 Next slide. So we are now in the
11 very first and a very important part in
12 the environmental review process. We
13 refer to it as scoping. Basically what
14 we are trying to do in this process is to
15 scope or identify the content of the
16 environmental review that we should be
17 doing. And we don't have all the
18 answers, we don't have all the questions.
19 And so scoping we go out to all the
20 interested federal, state and local
21 agencies. And another major component is
22 reaching out to you folks to enable you
23 to help us identify the issues that we
24 need to study in this environmental
25 impact statement. We've heard a lot of

1 important topics. We had our first
2 meeting last night, we've had -- we're
3 hearing a lot about impacts to farm
4 operations or impacts to drainage tile,
5 noise, air quality, there is -- you're
6 bringing up a lot of good topics and we
7 will be addressing all those topics in or
8 EIS. And that's why we're here, for you
9 to help us understand what the local
10 issues are so we can appropriately study
11 those in our environmental review.

12 Another thing we'd like to hear from
13 you folks are any suggestions you may
14 have on alternatives for the proposed
15 draft. The route that you have been
16 seeing on the map is proposed by the
17 Great Lakes Basin Transportation folks,
18 it's not our route, we didn't come up
19 with that route. That's what they're
20 proposing. And what we'd like you folks
21 to do is to help us identify potential
22 alternatives to that route that might
23 avoid or minimize some of the impacts
24 that are of concern to you. With the
25 information you provide us on the

1 impact -- potential impacts and
2 alternatives and we'll be looking at that
3 ourselves closely, identifying potential
4 alternative routes ourselves, we'll take
5 all that information and we'll finalize
6 the scope of our environmental review and
7 we'll identify the alternatives that
8 we're gonna study in the draft
9 environmental impact statement. And all
10 that information will be released to the
11 public to see and what we refer to as a
12 final scope of study that includes both
13 the issues we'll study and also the
14 alternatives that we'll study.

15 Next slide, please. We will then go
16 onto preparing the draft environmental
17 impact statement. It'll analyze the
18 potential effects of the route that's
19 been proposed by the applicant and the
20 alternatives that we've come up with with
21 your assistance. And all those
22 alternatives are treated equally. We
23 don't look at the -- the -- the applicant
24 or the railroad's alternative any closer
25 or less detailed. All the alternatives

1 are treated equally so there is no bias
2 in our environmental review.

3 We will also develop preliminary
4 mitigation on mitigating potential
5 impacts from the project. And we will
6 then prepare and issue the draft
7 environmental impact statement. And that
8 will be issued to the public and all you
9 folks that have signed up for -- for
10 notification you will receive
11 notification in the mail or email that
12 that document is available for you to
13 take a look at and to review and comment
14 on. And we will be back out for public
15 meetings again at that timeframe to hear
16 from you folks directly on what -- your
17 comments on the -- on the draft EIS.
18 And, again, we'll be looking for comments
19 on the -- the impact analysis that we
20 did, did we look at the issue
21 appropriately, did we miss something. If
22 we discussed potential mitigation, does
23 it -- does it go far enough, does it
24 address the mitigation you think should
25 be in there if this project were to move

1 forward.

2 Next slide, please. So we'll take
3 those -- those environmental comments we
4 get from the public such as yourselves
5 and also the agencies, the local
6 agencies, state agencies, federal
7 agencies that give us comments and we
8 will decide what we need to do with
9 those. Some of them might simply require
10 a written response that -- to clarify an
11 issue for you or to direct you where in
12 the document that information is already
13 provided because you've missed it. It's
14 gonna be a large document. Some comments
15 might require us to do some additional
16 analytical work, some comments might
17 require us to come back out in the field
18 and to do some more work. So it's
19 difficult to say how long that would take
20 because it depends on the nature of your
21 comments and what needs to be done in
22 response to those comments.

23 But once we are done we will issue
24 the final environmental impact statement.
25 And it will include appendices with all

1 your written comments provided in the
2 back and it will include responses to --
3 to all your comments.

4 In the final environmental impact
5 statement the office of the agency in
6 which I work, the Office of Environmental
7 Analysis, we will identify a preferred
8 alternative considering environmental --
9 potential environmental impacts. And we
10 will recommend what likely will be an
11 extensive list of mitigation. And those
12 will go as recommendations to our board
13 members. And we would recommend that if
14 the board chooses to approve this project
15 that we recommend that they adopt the
16 preferred alternative that we have
17 identified. And if they chose to approve
18 the project we recommend that they impose
19 the entire length of the mitigation
20 measures that we've recommended to them.

21 They will take those recommendations
22 and the entire environmental record, the
23 draft EIS, all your comments, the final
24 EIS as well as having reviewed the
25 transportation merits of the project and

1 they will issue a final decision. That's
2 a -- we currently have a three-member
3 board. It's been authorized to increase
4 to five members. What they do is they
5 individually review the merits of the
6 case and the environmental impacts and
7 each focus. And it's the majority that
8 carries the decision whether or not it's
9 approved or denied.

10 If the Surface Transportation Board
11 approves the project then any other
12 federal agencies that need to make
13 decisions will also need to issue their
14 decision. There likely will need to be a
15 decision from the -- one or more
16 districts of the Corps of Engineers,
17 there'll be a decision that will be
18 needed from the U.S. Coast Guard for the
19 proposed bridge crossings and there may
20 be one or two others.

21 Next slide, please. Applicant's
22 purpose and needs. We call this
23 applicant's purpose and need because this
24 is -- this is not my agency's project, we
25 did not propose, we didn't come up, we

1 didn't draw the line on the map.
2 We're -- we're a licensing agency. We
3 are required to respond to a proposal
4 when it comes to us and the -- and the
5 purpose and need, therefore, comes from
6 the railroad or the applicant. This is
7 what -- why they feel the project is
8 needed and this would be the purpose of
9 the project.

10 What they provided to us -- all of
11 us in writing is that the proposed rail
12 line would provide Class I railroads in
13 the Chicago area, there are six of them
14 currently, and a regional railroad. All
15 those railroads currently use the Chicago
16 metropolitan rail network. This proposed
17 rail line would enable them to bypass the
18 congested rail network currently in
19 Chicago. They also state that the
20 proposed rail line would add capacity to
21 the regional rail network to accommodate
22 existing and future rail traffic and --
23 while avoiding major population centers.

24 Next slide, please. What they
25 proposed is a approximately 278-mile rail

1 line, much of it would be double tracked,
2 meaning there would be two tracks.
3 The -- some areas near the end would be
4 single track, there would be just one
5 track and there is an area in the center
6 closer towards Manteno that would be
7 triple tracked.

8 That would -- the project generally
9 extends from this locality general,
10 Northwestern Indiana, goes down through
11 Illinois, turns north and goes up into
12 southern Wisconsin. Related to the
13 triple tracks that I mentioned to you
14 earlier, that's to accommodate a -- what
15 they expect, perhaps, would be a higher
16 number of trains in the center of the
17 project but also to provide service to a
18 rail yard or rail terminal that they are
19 proposing east of Manteno that would be
20 used to service and maintain their rail
21 equipment, their locomotives, their cars
22 as well as the equipment of their Class I
23 customers.

24 Next slide, please. And this is
25 just the -- the map of the proposed rail

1 line showing it from Northwestern Indiana
2 through Illinois and up into southern
3 Wisconsin.

4 Next slide, please. So now I just
5 wanted to review a couple of resources
6 that are available to you about this
7 project to help you participate in the
8 process, to provide us comments and also
9 to provide you with information about the
10 project as you go through this process
11 with us. This is the -- the home page of
12 my agency's website. The address is
13 provided to you on the brochure,
14 www.stb.dot.gov. And when you have
15 written comments that you would like to
16 file with us about what you want us to
17 study in the EIS, you can send those to
18 us by regular mail. And our address is
19 on the back of the brochure. And you can
20 also file them electronically through our
21 website.

22 And in the upper left-hand corner,
23 I'm sure you can't read that, but the far
24 left dark blue button says "E-FILING."
25 And you put your cursor over that button,

1 it drops down, it says, "E-FILING," you
2 click on that button, you look over to
3 the right side of the page and you'll see
4 the words "Environmental Comments" and
5 you just click on that and it opens up a
6 page and you type in your name and there
7 is a box there where you can type in your
8 comments. Or if you're doing it on your
9 home computer and typed up a letter or
10 lengthy document with -- on Word or some
11 other format, you can turn that into a
12 PDF document or you can attach it as a
13 PDF document or a Word file because you
14 might have more to say than that little
15 box enables you to provide. You can also
16 provide other types of attachments if you
17 have pictures, you can provide JPEGs, any
18 of those type of attachments you can
19 provide through the project -- through
20 our website here.

21 If you want to, some folks have
22 asked about if the Great Lakes Basin
23 folks formally filed their request for
24 this project and the answer to that is
25 they have not yet. But when they do, it

1 will show up here, there is a button
2 there called "Filings" and you'll be
3 able -- you can follow whether or not
4 they have submitted information or who --
5 you can -- who submitted the information
6 on this project. You can search by what
7 we refer to as the document number, it's
8 kind of our project number, which is the
9 35952 you've probably seen all over our
10 documents.

11 The other thing I'll point out, too,
12 there is a button -- again, you probably
13 can't read it, but it's near the center
14 it's called "Environmental Matters," you
15 put your cursor over that and you'll get
16 a drop down menu and there'll be a button
17 there identified called "Environmental
18 Correspondence." And you can, again,
19 search that by the docket number. And we
20 try to maintain an as transparent process
21 as possible. Anything that you folks
22 send us as comments, whether it comes
23 electronically through the website or it
24 comes through the U.S. Mail, it all gets
25 put up there. So you can go through

1 there and look at other people's
2 comments, see what other people are
3 saying. And it goes the other way when
4 whenever we write anyone about the
5 project, whether it's a federal or state
6 agency or we are writing to the applicant
7 requesting information or whatever the
8 topic is, you'll be able to see
9 everything that we sent them. That
10 includes anything we have sent out to an
11 outside party that goes by email or
12 regular mail. So if I respond to
13 something, a question somebody has in
14 writing through email, our response also
15 goes up on the website here.

16 Next slide, please. Now we have
17 also developed a project website
18 specifically for our environmental review
19 process. I don't want you to get it
20 confused with the website that the
21 applicant has prepared. Their website is
22 called, I think, greatlakesbasin.net,
23 that's their website. We have nothing to
24 do with that website or what information
25 is available on that website. This

1 website is ours and we are responsible
2 for everything that's on this website and
3 the address is on the back of the
4 brochure, it's called
5 greatlakesbasinraileis.com. And there
6 are a number of resources on here you
7 might be interested in knowing about.

8 We'll maintain on -- this is a
9 snapshot of the -- a screen shot of the
10 home page. We are -- on there we'll be
11 having project updates. And I -- in your
12 response to a question today I told a
13 woman when the railroad formally files
14 their request for the authority to
15 construct and operate this rail line, we
16 will put a little note on here that they
17 filed and we'll provide a link to our
18 website where you find that filing and
19 just make those a little bit easier for
20 you. We have a maps page there if you
21 click on that button and all the maps
22 that you see on the tables in the back
23 are available for you to look at. And
24 you can blow them up, increase the scale
25 and take a look at them closely. We also

1 have a file on there that's viewable
2 through a pre-program called Google Earth
3 and you open up that file and you can
4 really zoom down and look at things very,
5 very clearly on where your property is
6 and how the potential rail line would
7 effect you. So those are some useful
8 tools. All the poster boards, all the
9 brochures that you see here today will
10 eventually end up on that website.

11 So I know last night we had people
12 taking pictures with their cell phones of
13 the poster boards, you're obviously free
14 to do that that, they will -- we will be
15 posting them on the website for you to
16 view so you don't necessarily have to do
17 that.

18 Related links and documents,
19 whenever we have key information coming
20 in from the Great Lakes Basin folks we
21 will put it on here, also it would also
22 appear on our agency website. One thing
23 I'll mention is that we are having an
24 online scoping meeting. If you have
25 friends or neighbors that weren't able to

1 attend today because they had to work or
2 whatever, we are having a scoping meeting
3 online that people can participate on.
4 That's on Wednesday April 27th, that's
5 two weeks from tomorrow. It will be a
6 similar format to today. We won't be
7 able to have the informal open house
8 format but I'll provide the same
9 presentation to those folks online. You
10 can sign up to listen and if you'd like
11 to -- to speak on that public -- online
12 scoping meeting, you can register to
13 speak and Phillis and I and our team from
14 ICF will be there. We will hear what you
15 have to say and it will all be recorded
16 by a court reporter. And anyone else
17 that has -- that has logged into the
18 scoping meeting will also be able to hear
19 what you have so to say. So that's
20 another resource that's available to you.

21 Let's see, I think those are the
22 main things. It has some information
23 about our environmental review process, I
24 know we have gone over a lot today, it
25 runs through all that information again,

1 explains how we go through the process of
2 scoping and the draft EIS and then the
3 final EIS.

4 And next slide. I think that's it.
5 Thank you again for coming. Laura is
6 gonna help us go through the process of
7 getting your oral comments and calling
8 folks up and she'll explain that process.
9 I forgot, we have -- you may have already
10 heard but we have extended the comment
11 period, it was to conclude on May 16th,
12 it's been extended to June 15th. We
13 added 30 days to the process so you have
14 additional time to get those comments in.
15 And we're not -- you know, we encourage
16 you to submit comments by the 15th but
17 we're not -- you know, if you submit
18 something on the 16th it's not like we're
19 gonna ignore it. It still goes in the
20 record and we will consider your
21 comments. Thanks, Phillis.

22 MS. ZIEMKE: Thanks, Dave. So we're
23 just gonna take a couple minutes and
24 break down the presentation material or
25 stands and as they do that I will give

1 you a little bit of an outline of how the
2 oral comment period will run. We are
3 gonna pull this podium up here to the
4 front so that when you -- when the
5 individuals who marked their comment card
6 to speak, when they are speaking they can
7 speak to this front table here and also
8 to the court reporter.

9 We have a court reporter who will be
10 transcribing everything that is said.
11 With that said, if you have any personal
12 information -- or please do not share
13 personal information that you do not want
14 to be made public because everything
15 that's said here today will be made
16 public. The transcripts will be posted
17 on the website. All right. Can you all
18 hear me? Okay. All right.

19 Is there anyone -- as you came in
20 everyone filled out a card and marked if
21 you wanted to speak. Is there anyone who
22 didn't mark that they wanted to speak
23 today but they would like to speak and
24 give a comment? If you did raise your
25 hand and we will bring a card around to

1 those people. All right.

2 So as I mentioned we have court
3 reporter here today and she'll be
4 transcribing everything. As you come
5 forward I'll call -- I'm gonna call two
6 people at a time to the front because we
7 do have 40 people who have signed up to
8 speak. So I'll call two people at a time
9 and have one person sit here to the side
10 while the other one gives their comment
11 and then that way we can keep it moving.
12 Like I said, there are 40 people who
13 would like to speak so we want to keep it
14 moving.

15 As you -- speak clearly, speak to
16 the court reporter, please. When you
17 come up, state your name and then spell
18 your name for her. And if you're with an
19 organization, state the organization's
20 name as well. Each speaker will be given
21 three minutes and you don't have to take
22 the full three minutes. But if you do
23 start running into the end of your three
24 minutes, Tiffany over here will hold up a
25 30-second card just to let you know. And

1 if you do hit three minutes I will come
2 up and tap you on the shoulder and let
3 you know. We just need to be respectful
4 of everyone who wants to get a chance to
5 say their comments. If you have a lot to
6 say, I would suggest you say your most
7 important comments first and the
8 remainder of your comments, be sure to
9 submit those in writing. If time permits
10 at the end of the comment period here, we
11 will allow others to come up and speak as
12 well.

13 I do want to make sure everyone
14 understands that today is a comment --
15 this portion of the meeting is about
16 commenting, we are not having a question
17 and answer period. After this portion of
18 the meeting is finished, Phillis and Dave
19 will still be here and if you want to
20 come up and visit with them afterwards,
21 that'll be fine, ask your questions at
22 that point in time.

23 Also the comments that you make to
24 and throughout the scoping period, there
25 will not be a formal response to those

1 comments. What we will do with those
2 comments, as Dave said, is we'll take
3 those comments and we'll incorporate them
4 into the draft EIS. After the draft EIS
5 comes out, there is another comment
6 period and those comments will be
7 responded to.

8 Let's see, anything else that you
9 want to cover? All right. Let's see,
10 I'm going to go ahead and call up two
11 individuals. The first is Bob Martin and
12 the second will be Vicki Urbanik. So if
13 Bob and Vicki -- right here Bob and
14 Vicki, if you could come forward and take
15 your seat up here, please.

16 MR. MARTIN: Thank you for the
17 opportunity to speak. My name is
18 Robert Martin, M-A-R-T-I-N is the last
19 name, Robert is the first name. I'm a
20 long-time school board member, landowner,
21 grandfather and citizen who is greatly
22 impacted by this proposal. It has many
23 quantifiable drawbacks. This project
24 will create, noise, air and water
25 pollution. I'm concerned for the safety

1 of over 2,000 students in East Porter
2 County affected by the many grade
3 crossing and the closing of two roads
4 close to the final drop-off destination
5 of one of our schools, Morgan Township
6 Elementary Junior/Senior High School.

7 My wife and I lived and raised our
8 family within -- for 28 years within 100
9 feet of the then Pennsylvania Railroad.
10 There were 20 to 30 trains daily jarring
11 our home and a whistle announcing each of
12 the passings. Over a decade ago the
13 railroad shut down one of the dual
14 tracks, actually removing the ties and
15 the rail.

16 Why could this company not seek out
17 partners and replace lines like that one
18 where possible and use existing
19 right-of-ways where drainage and
20 community impact have already been
21 mitigated? This plan has not been
22 explored, better options exist than this
23 current form. It is very short-sided and
24 not something the federal government and
25 our federal tax dollars, as I'm sure

1 these meetings are not free, should
2 support. The federal government should
3 not be in the business of supporting a
4 few at the expense of others particularly
5 by granting the use of eminent domain.
6 Thank you for your time.

7 MS. ZIEMKE: Can Marvy Shreve -- or
8 Martin Shreve come up?

9 MS. URBANIK: Hello, my name is
10 Vicki Urbanik. My family and I live in
11 Morgan Township. We purchased our
12 property and moved there about 23 years
13 ago. That makes us a newcomer in South
14 Porter County. I wish to thank you, the
15 transportation board, for holding this
16 meeting in Porter County. It is greatly
17 appreciated. According to the -- I also
18 need to mention that I am a member of the
19 RAILED group.

20 According to the latest census
21 figures, nearly 60 percent of Indiana
22 counties have lost population from 2010
23 to 2015. Porter county is not one of
24 them. Porter County has been gaining in
25 population. Some of the largest

1 percentage increases in population have
2 been right here in South Porter County.
3 In fact, my home township of Morgan
4 Township led the way in the number of new
5 housing starts with a 47 percent increase
6 in housing starts from 2000 to 2010. So
7 we need to ask ourselves why are people
8 moving to Porter County and South Porter
9 County? I personally think it's because
10 we have an outstanding quality of life
11 here. We have a vibrant farming
12 community made up predominantly of
13 locally owned family farmers. We also
14 have property owners who own what I call
15 wild lands, people who want to preserve
16 their property for natural habitat, maybe
17 recreations purposes or hunting
18 preserves.

19 This is an area I can speak to. My
20 husband and I own about 13 acres. I know
21 that's not a lot, I wish it were more,
22 but other than a small section that our
23 home is located on, our property consists
24 of dense woods and wildlife -- and
25 wetlands. Our small parcel of land hosts

1 an amazing diversity of wildlife,
2 everywhere from wood ducks that are
3 nesting in our wetlands to the great
4 horned owls that are living in our woods.
5 We have also had sightings of state
6 endangered species. So we are very
7 concerned about how this rail line
8 proposal, which comes right north of our
9 property, and, in fact, cuts into our
10 woods and then leaves the western edge of
11 our woods pretty much inaccessible and
12 unusable, we have a concern about how
13 this impact would have an impact on our
14 wildlife.

15 We think that as Porter County is
16 growing, especially in South Porter
17 County, we should encourage people who
18 own wild lands to preserve them. Because
19 I tend to think that wildlife habitat
20 plays an important role in our ecosystem.

21 We are concerned about how the noise
22 of 110 trains a day will impact not just
23 the residents of our community but also
24 our wildlife. We're very concerned about
25 losing our great horned owls that live in

1 our woods. I'm also concerned about the
2 ability of local government to
3 effectively respond to incidents along
4 the railroad given that the tax structure
5 Porter -- in Indiana with our tax cap
6 system, we actually lose local government
7 funding.

8 So I urge you to reject this
9 proposal because of the impact on our
10 community would be profound and we will
11 lose permanently something that makes our
12 quality of life so special. Thank you.

13 MS. ZIEMKE: Vincent Kuznicki?

14 MR. SHREVE: My name is Marvin
15 Shreve, that's S-H-R-E-V-E. And I'm also
16 a member of the RAILED club. First of
17 all, I'd like to thank you for the very
18 informative presentation. It opened my
19 eyes to a lot of things and answered
20 quite a few. Since this is a comment
21 period, my -- I'm directing mine towards
22 a comment that was made by Mr. Patton.
23 And the statement basically was that this
24 project could destroy farms but selling
25 farms for a subdivision does the same

1 thing. He also stated that this is not a
2 black and white issue but a gray issue.
3 And I'd like to address that comment.

4 I would submit to Mr. Patton that
5 this is far from a gray issue. If he
6 would take a look at the areas that he
7 intends to traverse, he would find very
8 few subdivisions. There are subdivisions
9 in the area but not in prime farmland.
10 Where land has been sold for home sites,
11 by and large, they are alongside the edge
12 of the fields bordering the roads leaving
13 both farmland and homes co-existing side
14 by side. When the farmers did sell their
15 home sites, they could still continue
16 farming. It was not hindered by a maze
17 of rail crossings or by unnecessary noise
18 to distract either of them. It was not
19 hindered by roads being closed, crossings
20 being blocked or having to reroute to get
21 his product to the elevator. The
22 homeowners could enjoy the tranquil way
23 of living, his children could attend one
24 of the best -- and this is based on
25 statewide testing year after year --

1 schools available.

2 If the farmers are in the business
3 of selling land for subdivisions, they
4 would no longer be farmers, they would be
5 business speculators such as Mr. Patton.
6 Their priorities would be on making
7 money, not farming. That, sir, is a --
8 far from a gray issue. This is their
9 life and their livelihood, not a project.
10 Just selling land for a subdivision is
11 not that simple. Many variables are
12 taken into consideration, such as impact
13 on the schools, on the abilities of
14 environments, these are just a few that
15 must be considered before approval is
16 granted. The route through Malden, which
17 this project will take, is the site of
18 one such subdivision that was declined.

19 Maybe he deals in gray areas, which
20 is apparent but we deal in black and
21 white. He or his employees have given us
22 nothing to justify the impact this will
23 have on Porter County. Based on the
24 information that has been available to
25 date, any impact that is -- that is

1 apparent to me is negative. Thank you.

2 MS. ZIEMKE: Dan Steinhilber, can
3 you please come up?

4 MR. KUZNICKI: My name is Vincent
5 Kuznicki, last name, K-U-Z-N-I-C-K-I.
6 And I'm a member of a club, human race.
7 All right. We are here in Porter County.
8 Okay? I used to work for the railroad.
9 My job was to rebuild locomotives, dyno
10 test them and emissions test them. So I
11 got some numbers for you. Okay. First
12 off, we're gonna say why. Why does
13 somebody want to build a railroad like
14 this? Look at your handouts, look at the
15 map of the railroad. It crosses I-90 at
16 Rockford, it crosses I-80 in Ottawa, it
17 crosses I-57 in Manteno, 65 at Lowell and
18 then it crosses again at 80 at LaPorte,
19 that's the east side.

20 All right. Page 3 of what they
21 submitted for their proposal, there is a
22 word in there, it's call intermodal.
23 That means all these containers that go
24 on a train, once the railroad has the
25 permit to build a railroad, they will

1 build intermodal yards at these
2 intersections. Okay? There is no way to
3 tell how much emissions they are gonna
4 generate. Because we don't know what
5 their equipment is gonna be.

6 So we will just talk about, real
7 quick, best case scenario a locomotive
8 built in 2015 running on today's
9 emissions standards. All right. I need
10 you guys to -- when you go home, I want
11 you to do some research on what's in
12 diesel fuel. All right. Okay. When
13 they measure emissions they measure it
14 grams per gallon. Real tiny. Right?
15 Real small, little numbers. A locomotive
16 burns about 165 gallons an hour. Okay.
17 There'll be at least two locomotives on
18 each train. Okay. Now 165 miles a
19 gallon -- or a 165 gallons per hour, we
20 do the math and that comes out to -- with
21 110 trains that comes out to about 605
22 gallons per mile. That's how much they
23 burn.

24 Then we look at the emissions and,
25 like I say, they are measured in grams

1 per gallon. So real quick math,
2 particulate matter, it's gonna be
3 4.1 pounds per mile per day. Oxides and
4 nitrogen, 163 pounds per mile per day.
5 This is what you're gonna see. Sulfer
6 dioxide, 2.5 pounds per mile per day.
7 I'm done?

8 (Too many people in the audience talking.)

9 MR. KUZNICKI: What do you guys want
10 to do?

11 (Too many people in the audience talking.)

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:
13 (Unintelligible). We'd like to donate
14 our six minutes to --

15 MS. ZIEMKE: You know what, I'm
16 sorry, I need to stick with what we put
17 out in the guidelines. So I need to stop
18 you at this point. All right. Next
19 person, please. What I would like to
20 encourage you to do is please submit your
21 notes.

22 (Too many people in the audience talking.)

23 MR. STEINHILBER: My name is Daniel
24 Steinhilber, S-T-E-I-N-H-I-L-B-E-R. I
25 live in Morgan Township. I actually live

1 on State Road 49. The proposed tracks
2 comes within 120 feet of my house. Very
3 concerned with the noise and vibrations
4 and the effect that that'll have on my
5 everyday life. I also live a quarter
6 mile from Morgan Township school. If
7 there was a spill it would contaminate my
8 well and could have effects on my
9 children at the school. They proposed an
10 overpass over 49 that would be basically
11 in my front yard so I'm concerned with
12 drainage and the visual effects this
13 would have on our homestead.

14 MS. ZIEMKE: Robert Cauffman, please
15 come forward.

16 MS. RIPPE: Barb Rippe, R-I-P-P-E.
17 I'm here concerned about the school buses
18 and the children and the schools. Morgan
19 and Boone Grove are very close. Maybe 20
20 buses at a time pass by my road and they
21 will cross that track four times a day.
22 The buses have to go back and forth. And
23 I'm really concerned on the safety of the
24 children and the people of our community
25 crossings. Thank you.

1 MS. ZIEMKE: Chris Goetz, please
2 come forward.

3 MR. CAUFFMAN: Robert Cauffman,
4 C-A-U-F-F-M-A-N. I represent people from
5 RAILED as well as people in Porter
6 County. Try to combine to a three-minute
7 thing to meet your standard. I'm
8 concerned about drainage in this county
9 extensively. I retired as a former
10 conservation officer from Indiana so I
11 know what part of these environmental
12 impacts are gonna have. One of my
13 concerns is where this route is coming to
14 it's going to prohibit surface water from
15 running south to the Kankakee River.
16 Most water in this county from Division
17 Road flows to the south. By building
18 this dike across the center of Porter
19 County, you're gonna stop that water.

20 Since I retired I started excavation
21 work but most of my work is preparing
22 field tiles. There are literally
23 thousands of miles of field tiles within
24 this county that this is going to
25 intercept, cut and damage. If we damage

1 these tiles and block our surface water,
2 you're gonna start creating flooding for
3 current subdivisions as well as current
4 county roads. It was recently brought to
5 my attention by an engineer from the
6 Northern Indiana Public Service Company
7 that once this comes into effect and we
8 block off the flow of water, we will now
9 start reducing the amount of water that
10 makes it to the Kankakee River. They are
11 set by federal standards that if the
12 level of the river drops to certain
13 levels they will have to shut down the
14 Wheatfield power plant, which will stop
15 power to one-fifth of the country, not
16 just the county but the country.

17 I ask that the Board look at needs
18 versus want. They are more than capable
19 of putting a two-track system over what
20 they have proposed into a 99-foot
21 easement. Yet they have asked for a
22 200-foot easement. Why are we
23 considering giving them an additional
24 200 -- additional 99 feet when they only
25 need 99 feet.

1 Secondly, they have asked to have a
2 50-foot easement for utilities. I
3 believe the Surface Transportation Board
4 oversees rail and transportation of cargo
5 across water. They are not -- they are
6 not asked to contain underground
7 utilities. Why are we even considering a
8 50-foot utility easement if that's what
9 he is asking for? Let's keep the study
10 to what the Surface Transportation Board
11 is designed for and not for underground
12 utilities.

13 Mr. Patton has come out recently
14 saying that we will only run 10 to 12
15 trains per day. In his original proposal
16 he's called for 110 trains. Anybody in
17 business will not start a business saying
18 we are only gonna run our business at
19 10 percent capacity. He will run as much
20 as he can to get what he is trying to
21 form with his plan. I ask that the Board
22 consider this and deny this permit.
23 Thank you.

24 MS. ZIEMKE: Lori Utpatel, can you
25 please come forward?

1 MR. GOETZ: My name Chris Goetz,
2 spelled G-O-E-T-Z. And I'm a local
3 farmer and businessman and part owner of
4 Wyckoff Hybrids, local seed corn company.
5 And we represent at least six families
6 that are involved in our company, not to
7 mention probably many of the rest of you.
8 But thank you for your time. Members of
9 the Surface Transportation Board, I want
10 to go on record saying I'm opposed to the
11 proposed freight train bypass line. We
12 are a family farmers. Yes, all of us who
13 are in this room and elsewhere, have a
14 long, sometimes more than a century
15 relationship with our land. We plan to
16 pass our land on to the next generation
17 and it is how we make our living and it
18 is not for sale.

19 That being said there is some
20 practical and safety considerations I
21 believe you cannot ignore. Traffic is
22 already heavy on many of our rural roads.
23 Obstructing the traffic with frequent
24 trains will cause problems with rural
25 commutes, school buses, fire and EMS

1 response times. You'll be cutting off
2 every north-south road in Porter County
3 except the eastern county line. All
4 roads north of 400 East to 600 North will
5 also be obstructed with the 110 trains a
6 day effectively isolating North County
7 from South County. Most of the grain
8 must cross tracks to and from farms to
9 get to market and this, I think, would
10 create a fall nightmare around here.

11 You are crossing our property over
12 some our most productive soils on our
13 farm. And you're also on some of our
14 wettest and most unstable ground, not
15 only in our farm but others in Northwest
16 Indiana. These soils won't hold a pickup
17 truck when they're wet let alone a train
18 weighing several hundred tons.

19 Your proximity to my house is less
20 than an eighth of a mile. The noise, the
21 smell and rumble and possible pollution
22 will be a constant nuisance and annoyance
23 and, believe me, these are not strong
24 enough words. We already cross four
25 different tracks in our farming

1 operation. Some of them are on multiple
2 crossings. We have challenged -- a
3 challenging time getting to and from
4 fields for normal operations in the fall
5 and spring, roughly half the year.

6 The frequencies of these existing
7 trains is less than 15 percent of what
8 you're saying your capacity of 120 trains
9 per day will be. Even at half that
10 amount it will cause costly delays and
11 in excess -- in accessing isolated fields
12 and road travel. Inconvenience is also
13 not a strong enough word to mention this.

14 Finally, you have promised a fair
15 price, 20,000 per acre. The few acres
16 that you must pay me for, the amount --
17 I'm not gonna disclose that amount but if
18 you paid me this amount every year of my
19 life and my children's life and my
20 grandchildren's life it would not be
21 enough to be considered fair compensation
22 for the complete disruption of life,
23 safety and travel in and out of our
24 fields. Thank you.

25

1 MR. WHEELER: My name is Richard
2 Wheeler, W-H-E-E-L-E-R, I live in
3 Valparaiso. I thank you folks for having
4 this meeting here today and giving us the
5 opportunity to speak. And I also wanted
6 to thank Mr. Kuznicki for his comments.
7 I'm not an expert on what this is going
8 to do to the environment so I can't speak
9 to those issues but I do want to speak to
10 the issue of quality of life.

11 And as Mr. Kuznicki stated, the
12 problem of all of this excess fuel being
13 used going through this area, we are
14 already being penalized here in Lake and
15 Porter Counties for emissions, having to
16 have our vehicles tested because of
17 traffic that's going through on the
18 existing highways. Now, we have already
19 got that problem going on and we are
20 gonna add all this to it? I don't think
21 it's a good idea.

22 Now, I'm gonna go to my original
23 comments. I absolutely and unequivocally
24 oppose this whole project. That will
25 come as no surprise to many people in

1 this room. I have, for a long time, been
2 an observer of issues such as this one
3 where the public is politely listened to
4 and completely ignored all in the
5 interest of progress, private profit and
6 economic development.

7 Then we talk about quality of life.
8 What is quality of life? Quality of life
9 to me is being able to enjoy your life,
10 your children enjoy their life and their
11 heritage. And it's not all about money
12 as seems to be the case. I sincerely
13 hope that for once the public -- what the
14 public wants is what the public gets and
15 that we don't have policies being changed
16 downstate to accommodate the chosen few.
17 Listen to the people and make sure their
18 voices are heard and their concerns are
19 the deciding factor, not big business.
20 This is still, thank God, supposed to be
21 government of the people, by the people
22 and for the people, not of big money, by
23 big money and for big money. Thank you
24 very much.

25 MS. ZIEMKE: Angela Fox, please come

1 forward.

2 MS. UTPATEL: Hi. My name is Lori
3 Utpatel, L-O-R-I U-T-P-A-T-E-L. I live
4 in Hebron, I live in Park Place
5 Subdivision. The proposed rail line is
6 going to go north of the power lines,
7 probably within a half mile of my house.
8 My concern is we have been dealing with
9 flooding in our subdivision and we know
10 that where that's gonna go through a lot
11 of the water that we're getting is coming
12 from that farmland. And we are two years
13 in the progress, the town is, of doing
14 engineering studies and trying to get
15 this resolved. And I just feel we don't
16 know what's gonna happen when they put --
17 if they do put this through. And we're
18 this close to finally solving some of the
19 drainage issues and that could just all
20 be thrown out the window right now.

21 So I propose (sic) to this and I do
22 hope that they get together with the town
23 if they are gonna do this. Like I said,
24 it's just a waste of time the engineering
25 studies they have done. Thank you.

1 MS. ZIEMKE: Shawn (unintelligible.)
2 Shawn, will you please come forward? Is
3 Shawn out there? No, okay. Scott Rice?

4 MS. FOX: Hello. My name Angela
5 Fox, F-O-X. And I'm here just as a
6 resident of Porter County for the very
7 majority of my life. I grew up in
8 Hebron, my parents graduated from Hebron
9 High School, so did myself and my
10 siblings. So I'm here just to say that
11 we need to preserve what we have. To let
12 somebody come in and slice our -- our
13 county in two, it would be a devastation
14 to everybody sitting in this room and
15 millions of other people that will be
16 affected down through the ages.

17 The other thing that -- well, I was
18 in banking for 31 years so a lot of
19 people, farmers especially, have been my
20 customers. And I have watched
21 generations farm and to have that be
22 disrupted and -- with no thought, what
23 does that do to families and farms is an
24 issue that I think should be on
25 everybody's mind. Without farmers we

1 don't have food, that's that simple.

2 And I also volunteered and was an
3 executive in the Red Cross here for eight
4 years so I know emergency management. I
5 know what happens when trains derail. I
6 know what happens when there are huge
7 fires and all of the townships have to
8 get together and work together they have
9 to haul water. We don't all have city
10 water where we have plenty of water to
11 fight fires. So it's just not
12 environmental, it's just not property but
13 it's trying to help everybody that lives
14 inside our area.

15 So I think everybody on the board
16 should be very, very concerned about,
17 again, quality of life for the people who
18 live here. Thank you.

19 MS. ZIEMKE: Deborah Bennett.
20 Deborah, will you please come forward?

21 MR. RICE: Hi my name is Scott Rice,
22 last name is R-I-C-E. I'm a resident of
23 Porter County here but farm primarily in
24 LaPorte County but my sons and I also
25 operate a farm in Morgan Township here in

1 Porter County where the proposed route
2 would go directly through one of the
3 fields. Many of my issues have been
4 already been spoken to very well by
5 others and I appreciate that.

6 What I'd like to bring to the Board
7 would be under the land use issue. I
8 wanted to make you aware that in our
9 region here, Lake, Porter and LaPorte
10 County, we have developed agriculturally
11 in the last few years a very strong and
12 vibrant specialty crop area here that has
13 brought a lot of vitality to our economy.
14 That is all driven on the backs of
15 irrigation. And we are blessed with a
16 very great aquifer under this whole area.
17 And the -- the field that I'm speaking of
18 where the rail line would cut through
19 already has an existing irrigation system
20 on it with a well. The route of the rail
21 would actually go right where those
22 center pivots are anchored and the
23 existing well there would have to be
24 dealt with somehow to make sure that that
25 was not an environmental issue.

1 So in the larger picture, though,
2 I'm concerned about what are we going to
3 do to that industry that has served us
4 well really since the 1970's? It's not
5 just about what's already there as far as
6 irrigation, it's even about the potential
7 that might be down the road, even if some
8 of us in this room have no interest in
9 doing that but perhaps 20, 30, 50 years
10 down the road. Once those barriers are
11 in place they are forever, as we all know
12 as we deal with the existing
13 right-of-ways. So my concern is in that
14 regard for my sons, my grandsons and
15 future generation so I would appreciate
16 any consideration that you would make of
17 that situation and I wanted to state my
18 opposition to this rail line. Thank you
19 very much.

20 MS. ZIEMKE: Mike Herlitz.

21 MS. BENNETT: My name is Deborah
22 Bennett, B-E-N-N-E-T-T, Deborah,
23 D-E-B-O-R-A-H. I'm a resident in South
24 County, Porter County and I -- about
25 halfway between Hebron and Kouts right

1 off the route. A few years ago the
2 county decided to move their hospital a
3 few miles north. So if there was an
4 emergency situation, we have one EMT
5 station within our region about four
6 miles away. That would be taking us
7 about 20 minutes to go north up to the
8 northern part of the county to that
9 hospital. Another possibility would be
10 to go west on U.S. 231, which is also
11 gonna be transversed by this railroad, to
12 the St. Anthony's Center there. And
13 that's about another 20 minute ride. So
14 there was some issues about EMT response
15 to be able to get people to hospitals
16 many miles away.

17 I also -- the location where I am,
18 my daughter being in the schools, the bus
19 driver at her particular time had a
20 22-mile route, a double route. So they
21 went it twice a day. And she transverses
22 back and forth across many of those areas
23 that are gonna be proposed in the rail
24 lines. So not only is it an hour ride
25 but also the fact that we are dealing

1 with multiple times that they will be
2 crossing the railroad tracks, which would
3 be making the ride longer but also much
4 more unsafe, I think, for the children.

5 And, thirdly, Hebron has the
6 distinctive opportunity for those trucks
7 who wish to ignore the scales on I-65 to
8 be the location where they go from Route
9 up to U.S. 231 to go back to I-65. So,
10 again, you're dealing with a lot of truck
11 traffic coming through the town as well
12 as they head west they would be crossing
13 over 231 again. I'm hearing about the
14 issues of some roads being closed, some
15 grade possibility -- I haven't seen the
16 maps myself, I didn't realize they are in
17 the back -- but the opportunity for
18 people to transverse different places,
19 it's a major commuter area, which are
20 going up to U.S. 30 and north even
21 (unintelligible) county south of us. So
22 we're also dealing with a lot of delays
23 for people trying to get to work or
24 delays of major traffic areas for these
25 roads to be possibly closed or to be

1 inconvenienced. Thank you.

2 MS. ZIEMKE: Fran Kras, can you
3 please come forward?

4 MR. HERLITZ: Mike Herlitz,
5 H-E-R-L-I-T-Z. The proposed rail goes
6 through my family farm. It was purchased
7 by my great, great, great, great
8 grandfather William Dye (phonetic) from
9 the federal government back in 1837.

10 Your slide up here said "Purpose and
11 Need." The GLB has done a great job
12 providing the purpose but they have not
13 stated a need. This railroad was once
14 proposed as part of the Illiana
15 Expressway and would have followed the
16 same route. I would like to quote an
17 article from November 10, 2013, Northwest
18 Indiana Times, I quote, we oppose the
19 idea of a freight railroad line running
20 or built in the association with Illiana
21 Expressway said Joseph Ciaccio, president
22 of the Illinois Railroad Association,
23 which represents interests of all six
24 Class I railroads as well as numerous
25 short line railroads operating in

1 Illinois, end quote.

2 So the railroads have said there is
3 no need for this. In an article in the
4 Chicago Tribune from March 16th of this
5 year, it confirms the lack of support
6 from the major railroads. I quote again,
7 Union Pacific said Monday that after
8 careful re -- carefully reviewing the
9 proposal Union Pacific determined in July
10 of 2014 that it was not interested in
11 moving forward in the discussion on the
12 Great Lakes Basin Railroad's bypass
13 project. We have repeatedly communicated
14 this position to Great Lake Basin's
15 leadership team, Union Pacific
16 spokeswoman Calli Hite said. Union
17 Pacific is focused on several major
18 public private partnerships including
19 CREATE, which will benefit the region and
20 enhance efficiency for Chicago area and
21 regional railroads, end quote.

22 So just because there's a purpose
23 doesn't mean there is a need. In the
24 Northwest Indiana article Patton also was
25 quoted, everyone said don't pay attention

1 to what anyone tells you, those
2 timetables are just too good to ignore.
3 So is there really a need for a railroad
4 or a want of a private investor who
5 thinks he can get rich at the expense of
6 destroying our rural lifestyle? Does an
7 8 billion-dollar bypass even make sense?
8 Put that in perspective. There are two
9 major eastern railroads that are only
10 valued with their stock value around
11 25 billion. But without the support of
12 the railroads can the GLB even survive?
13 And if it fails an aerial image of the
14 area shows that abandoned railroads leave
15 scars in the land that remain forever.
16 There is no need for this railroad, it
17 should not be built.

18 MS. ZIEMKE: Charles Crowder, are
19 you still here? All right. Roger Clark?

20 MS. KRAS: My name is Fran Kras,
21 K-R-A-S, as in Sam, rhymes with grass. I
22 thank you for having this meeting I've
23 learned a lot today. I wish I'd known a
24 lot more so I would have it to help me
25 write this at 5:30 this morning before I

1 fed my small herd. It was 11 years ago I
2 completely abandoned my city life to move
3 to Westville. As a writer, it's been a
4 life changer for me. I have five little
5 acres dotted with various rescue animals
6 and wildlife and I'm lucky enough to call
7 this amazing place not only my home but
8 my office. Not only do I have the peace
9 and quiet I need to get my writing done
10 but also a place to recharge my battery
11 with the sounds of the migrating sandhill
12 crane, persistent pileated woodpeckers
13 and the hooting of a great horned owl.
14 It has been the most rewarding time of my
15 life.

16 But with six rails hosting 110
17 trains a day a half mile from my back
18 door, I don't imagine I'll be waxing
19 poetic on the sounds or the pollution
20 that will surround me then. I don't
21 imagine I'll be making a (unintelligible)
22 here at all. It will so drastically
23 change my living and working environment
24 and I am just one among many. When I
25 moved here, I knew nothing of the rural

1 living. But with the help of my generous
2 and patient neighbors, I learned as I
3 went along.

4 I was surprised to discover I'd be
5 depending on a volunteer fire department.
6 To me, that seemed a romantic notion from
7 an old movie. But with a station less
8 than two miles away, I was reassured all
9 was good. But now I wonder how will they
10 get to my neighbors or me if we need
11 them? There will be six rail lines
12 between the volunteers and the station?
13 Six rail lines of a train every 13
14 minutes between the station and my home?
15 How long will I wait if I have a stroke?
16 How long will the farmer across the road
17 wait if he has an accident? The
18 Westville Volunteer Fire Department
19 suddenly went from being a mere two miles
20 away to being a lifetime away if there is
21 an emergency.

22 Again, I'm one among many families
23 who live on my road, many who couldn't
24 leave work to be here today to talk about
25 the many other ways it will affect their

1 lives. I'm not a farmer who works
2 hundreds of acres that could be
3 jeopardized by this rail plan, I'm just a
4 writer who works from home who believes
5 she gets as much out of this rich,
6 peaceful land as the farmers around her
7 but she is asking you that you think long
8 and hard about all the ways the Great
9 Lakes Basin Rail Project would negatively
10 impact this community. Because this
11 writer has only had a few days to think
12 about it. Thank you.

13 MS. ZIEMKE: Marty Good? Marty, can
14 you please come forward?

15 MR. CLARK: My name is Roger Clark,
16 C-L-A-R-K. I'm from the south part of
17 the county. I'm a farmer and the
18 operator of the farm. When the railroad
19 or this proposal goes through, it will be
20 about a quarter of a mile from our house
21 and our farmstead. And I have got a few
22 questions. Why -- it's gonna affect me
23 tremendous. Why can't someone from your
24 department or from the -- from the
25 railroad come out and feasible look at

1 this, what it could be causing? For the
2 drainage, I have drainage surface water
3 from two other neighbors, we have
4 underground tile that goes back to the
5 lower ground and that is right where this
6 hob of the railroad is proposed.

7 Now if they break this -- the tile,
8 it's gonna pond, it's gonna go ahead and
9 cause disease, could be the -- this
10 Vikra -- is it Zebra or what -- Zika,
11 sorry about that. I'm not nervous. But
12 anyway this could cause several --
13 several disease problems. And it's
14 just -- isn't right. I think we should
15 be -- come on one and one and to try to
16 see what the situation is. I could stand
17 and talk about it for a half hour but you
18 could look at it in five minutes and see
19 what this solution could be or what could
20 really happen.

21 And the next thing is the weather
22 here in Porter County, Lake County and
23 LaPorte. We are only about 20 miles from
24 Lake Michigan. In the winter time we
25 have severe winter storms, snow and so

1 forth. The highways get closed, county
2 roads get closed. In my particular
3 situation it's gonna be a half a mile
4 from any road. If there is a chemical
5 spill how -- how is this -- how is the
6 hazmat and the fire department, how are
7 they gonna get to it? It takes pay
8 loaders on the highway to open up the
9 highway, there's drifts eight or 10 foot
10 deep throughout the whole county when we
11 get all this north wind of snow. So how
12 can they get back and do this? Plus our
13 local fire department, they're not
14 equipped, they're gonna have to spend
15 thousands and thousands of dollars if
16 there is some kind of a spill.

17 Now when there is a spill, I have
18 got a waterway on both sides of the
19 railroad. This contaminant can go into
20 the -- into this waterway. Then there is
21 open ditch, it can go to the Town of
22 Hebron. It can be no longer well
23 water -- 'cause we all have well water.
24 So it could very well -- it's the same as
25 Kouts. It could very well affect our

1 water supply. Thank you.

2 MS. ZIEMKE: Debra Lynch Dubovich.

3 MR. GOOD: Good morning, Marty Good,
4 G-O-O-D. Thank you for the opportunity
5 to speak. It's interesting that Roger
6 went right before me. He is my neighbor
7 to the north. He and I and some other
8 neighbors participated in the last few
9 years with USDA and the Division of Soil
10 and Water to construct a rather large
11 project to mitigate the flooding, to
12 enhance water quality and to stop soil
13 erosion on hundreds of acres that we
14 operate. The railroad will cut
15 diagonally across this project and
16 compromise the ability of this project to
17 control flooding, soil erosion and water
18 quality issues. My son and I farm in all
19 four townships in the south end of the
20 county. We endeavor to keep our farming
21 equipment off the major routes during
22 rush hours. There are significant rush
23 hours, particularly on Indiana 49. If
24 county roads are stubbed or are even
25 compromised by a grade crossing it

1 becomes very difficult for us to move
2 farm equipment in safe manner. We
3 endeavor to keep safety for ourselves and
4 for our friends and our neighbors around
5 the farms.

6 The soils in the major project that
7 Roger and I participated in are deemed by
8 the county as unstable. They are
9 severely impacted or severely -- I'm
10 sorry, deemed not suitable for any kind
11 of development. It's ag ground. If the
12 railroad were to come through, how deep
13 will they cut to get these unsuitable
14 soils, clay soils out of the way? And
15 what kind of a dam or dike would we have
16 that stops the flow of water north to
17 south of the county down towards the
18 North Kankakee? It would be a sad day if
19 this project comes to fruition for Porter
20 County. Thank you.

21 MS. ZIEMKE: Sue Nicksch?

22 MS. LYNCH DUBOVICH: Good morning.
23 My name is Debra Lynch Dubovich,
24 D-E-B-R-A L-Y-N-C-H D-U-B-O-V-I-C-H. And
25 I wanted talk today -- there were many,

1 many issues but one of the things that
2 you haven't heard yet is about a very
3 historical and cultural aspect of South
4 Porter County, specifically the Boone
5 Grove area, that all my friends and
6 neighbors know about but you from
7 Washington may not be aware. We here, in
8 this part of the county, we have the most
9 significant and historic Native American
10 burial mounds. If you look on that map
11 you will see the railroad goes right by
12 Ludington Ditch and that used to be
13 called Wolf Creek and that is the site of
14 these burial mounds.

15 Now where did they come from? Well,
16 2,200 years ago before the birth of
17 Christ, the first civilized people in
18 Indiana were the Hopewell Indians,
19 ancient ancestors of current Indian North
20 American -- Native American tribes. And
21 these Hopewell Native American people,
22 they were prehistoric, they didn't have a
23 written language and we only know of them
24 through their artifacts. In South Porter
25 County for many years we have

1 consistently had archeological digs and
2 the artifacts that have been found are
3 very significant. In fact, the head of
4 the Kankakee Valley Historical Society,
5 John Hodson has a historical artifact
6 named after him. It's the Hodson tool,
7 because it was found nowhere else, just
8 here in South Porter County.

9 Now these mounds, people say, oh,
10 well, the farmers farm over them and, you
11 know, they are making them lower and they
12 are not historic anymore. But they are.
13 Because the Native Americans, they didn't
14 bury their dead or their artifacts in the
15 mounds. The mounds were like earth and
16 tombstones. The bodies are still
17 underneath. And by farming it's not like
18 you've desecrated the land, it's the
19 cycle of life. It's life from death.

20 It's -- and in 2002, this is really
21 important, they were not old things that
22 people have forgotten about. In 2002,
23 the Pokagon group of the Potawatomi
24 Indians came up here under the Federal
25 Native American Grave Restoration Act and

1 certified that land as sacred burial
2 grounds. That's where they want to put
3 the railroad.

4 MS. ZIEMKE: Sylvia
5 (unintelligible)? Sylvia? I'm gonna
6 call the next person then, Phyllis Malis?

7 MS. NIKSCH: Sue Nicksch,
8 N-I-K-S-C-H. I appreciate the attention
9 that you seem to be cordially giving
10 every person who is coming up here.
11 That's very nice of you. Much of what
12 was on my mind has already been spoken.
13 I come from a farm family and this
14 proposal would pass through our farm.
15 Every acre of farmland that would be
16 destroyed by the rail land could never --
17 it's -- it's -- you can't reverse this
18 and you can never produce, you know, food
19 for everyone. Those acres are lost
20 forever and we don't have farmland in
21 order to feed our people -- our people,
22 to feed folks. What are you going to do?
23 You can't manufacture farmland sometime
24 in the future. Thanks for your time.

25 MS. ZIEMKE: Ryan Morrow? Ryan?

1 MS. MALIS: Good morning. My name
2 is Phyllis Malis, P-H-Y-L-L-I-S
3 M-A-L-I-S. My husband and I have only
4 lived in Porter County 25 years, I know
5 that's a short amount of time compared to
6 a lot of you but we truly love it here.
7 We have 15 acres in Porter Township, 11
8 of which are wooded and wetlands. And
9 they are certified as a nation -- an
10 official wildlife habitat by the DNR. So
11 we are extremely concerned about any
12 potential pollution, whether it be air,
13 water, noise, that this railroad could
14 cause for our property.

15 We also are concerned about
16 emergency vehicles. Our concerns are --
17 have already been spoken to by most of
18 you. But one of the things that I have
19 not heard mentioned that is very dear to
20 me is as a retired school teacher, I have
21 time to do volunteer work. And I
22 volunteer with the Visiting Nursing
23 Association as a driver for Meals on
24 Wheels. I deliver in Porter Township
25 into -- crossover into Lake County but

1 most of my clients are in the Hebron
2 area. My route covers 60 miles, it takes
3 two and-a-half hours to drive it. As my
4 route is right now, I'll have to cross
5 those train tracks from the proposed
6 tracks six times during the route. Six
7 times doesn't sound like a whole lot
8 until you factor in stopping and waiting
9 for trains going by.

10 Most of my clients are diabetic,
11 they need to eat at a regular interval.
12 They rely on our routes being timely.
13 They'll sit there and they'll --
14 sometimes I'll come in and they'll go
15 Phillis, you're five minutes late. They
16 rely on us for wellness checks and that
17 constant care that we provide for them.
18 So I'm very concerned about what could
19 potentially harm these clients simply
20 because someone wants to make a lot of
21 money by putting a rail line in. Thank
22 you for listening to us and I know that
23 you will listen to all our concerns. I
24 wanted to speak on behalf of my clients
25 who couldn't be here to speak for

1 themselves. Thank you.

2 MS. ZIEMKE: Mark Vandermolen?

3 Mark? Next person, Barbara Patterson?

4 Barbara? Are you Barbara?

5 MR. MORROW: My name is Ryan Morrow,
6 M-O-R-R-O-W. I'd just like to say that
7 just by a show of hands for the people
8 that are out here, how many of us are
9 farmers? Go ahead, raise your hand. Now
10 as you can see those people that raised
11 their hand are the same amount of -- or
12 probably not as much as the people in
13 Manteno. And just to let everybody know
14 last night I went to the meeting and
15 they're all against it in Illinois just
16 like we are here today. Just to let you
17 know because all those people that raised
18 their hands in that meeting are the same
19 people that raised their hand because
20 this is not a good idea.

21 You're gonna take away people's
22 property to put a rail system? And we
23 don't even use the rail systems we have
24 now. So now you're gonna put six more
25 rail tracks in, all the pollution,

1 everything bad, even the waterway like
2 Dan said. You stop the natural flow of
3 water from Valparaiso to Hebron all the
4 way to the Kankakee River. That's where
5 my farm is. You take away proper water
6 that I need to take care of my crops, my
7 animals, my everyday living. You know,
8 people do this because they want to do
9 it. Their grandfathers did it, their
10 great grandfathers did it, their parents
11 did it, we did it. And I want to pass
12 those same values to my kids. You take
13 this rail system, you put it in, it's bad
14 for everybody.

15 It doesn't tell us economic growth
16 in our area, it takes away economic
17 growth because you take the farmland away
18 from the farmers that had it. Thank you.

19 MS. ZIEMKE: Margaret Huff?
20 Margaret?

21 MR. PATTERSON: My name is Jonathan
22 Patterson, J-O-N-A-T-H-A-N, Patterson,
23 P-A-T-T-E-R-S-O-N. I'm speaking on
24 behalf of my mother, Barbara Patterson.
25 She's a little too hot right now to be

1 talking. I'm gonna be the calm voice.
2 So she is hot because she is a lifetime
3 farmer as well. I'm sure a lot of
4 farmers in this room will know the name
5 Richard Gumz, may he rest in peace,
6 that's my grandfather. He started his
7 farm in the early 1900s after graduating
8 from eighth grade with a horse-drawn
9 plow, became one of the biggest farmers
10 in the midwest by being on the farm and
11 working, having half of his fingers cut
12 off, working himself to the bone to the
13 age of 98 when he was out at that farm
14 two days before he died.

15 Farmers live for their land, they
16 don't live for money. This is about
17 money. You're taking livelihood away,
18 you're taking farmland away from people
19 that have spent their entire life to pay
20 for it. You offer a certain amount of
21 money to place something, whatever feet
22 it may be, which actually potentially
23 could ruin everything. You're not
24 ruining land, you're ruining families.

25 The amount of jobs that this

1 railroad could actually give doesn't come
2 close to the number of families this
3 could ruin, absolutely ruin. Farmers are
4 hard working Americans. They pay their
5 taxes, they pay too much taxes to allow
6 someone else to come in and profit from
7 the land that has been worked for many
8 years.

9 And a lot of this land is muck land
10 and a lot of this land can't be built on.
11 And it will take even more devastation to
12 be able to make it into buildable land.
13 And if this happens I'm gonna be out
14 there taking video of every bulldozer and
15 backhoe that gets stuck in that muck land
16 and I'm gonna pump more water into that
17 farm. Thank you all.

18 MS. ZIEMKE: Stacy Schmidt? Stacy?
19 I'll move on to the next person. Frank
20 Gomalez (sic)?

21 MS. HUFF: Good morning board
22 members and consultants. My name is
23 Margaret Huff, M-A-R-G-A-R-E-T, Huff,
24 H-U-F-F. Thank you for being here today
25 to hear this community's voices. I have

1 actually since moved out of the area. My
2 parents continue to be homeowners
3 approximately 2,000 feet from where this
4 proposed rail line is going through. And
5 I was compelled to speak on their behalf
6 as well as our neighbors and even those
7 outside the area that are watching what
8 goes on in this region. I'd like to
9 speak today on two of the potential
10 categories, safety and socioeconomic.
11 Sorry, I public speak very often but I
12 always get nervous.

13 All right. So although the Great
14 Lakes Basin states that they are trying
15 to avoid population centers, I believe
16 that they have greatly under estimated
17 population -- the population growth here
18 and where those population centers are.
19 The proposed routes go very near many of
20 the Porter County, especially Sout Porter
21 County, schools. In regards to safety,
22 it should be taken into account what
23 would happen in the event of a hazardous
24 material spill. The prevailing winds for
25 many of these schools would take hazards

1 right over our most sensitive and
2 concentrated population centers, our
3 schools. Sorry. Specifically, even if
4 they were to move outside into the
5 alternate corridor, those winds could
6 still carry hazardous material several
7 miles because of the winds. Those are
8 things that should be considered during
9 this environmental impact study.

10 In regards to the socioeconomic, the
11 economic effect felt by the families
12 whose land is ceased will be felt for
13 generations and will bypass the
14 compensation that would be offered by
15 Great Lakes Basin. The definition of
16 eminent domain and the ability to
17 exercise it, must show that there is a
18 public advantage over the loss of
19 individuals whose land is ceased. I
20 encourage you in your socioeconomic study
21 to determine what public advantage there
22 will be given by Great Lakes Basin.

23 Sorry. In alternate, there are
24 existing Class I railways throughout
25 south and west of Chicago. Great Lakes

1 Basin should consider the addition of
2 track or shorter connectors between those
3 existing tracks rather than this route
4 which is proposed a 278-mile upheaval.

5 In closing, I would like you to
6 consider the potential socioeconomic
7 effects of the region. And I urge you to
8 consider the motivation of Great Lakes
9 Basin. As Mr. Herlitz had said in this
10 socioeconomic detrimental proposal, is it
11 being proposed out of necessity for
12 public good or the convenience, time
13 savings and profits of a private
14 corporation? Thank you.

15 MS. ZIEMKE: Lisa Jenns? Lisa?

16 MR. GONZALEZ: Good afternoon, Frank
17 Gonzalez, G-O-N-Z-A-L-E-Z. First of all,
18 I want to thank the Surface
19 Transportation Board and everyone here
20 for being here today. So lifelong
21 Indiana resident, my wife and I moved
22 into Hebron 16 years ago. She is back
23 there, my son-in-law, JD, raised our
24 family here. I'm here to express my
25 opposition to the Great Lakes Basin

1 Transportation Corporation's railroad
2 plan through Northwest Indiana,
3 specifically through the land directly
4 south of my home in Porter County. My
5 family and I have been in this location
6 for the last 16 years. I want to point
7 out specific concerns we have as it
8 pertains to the project in whole and at
9 this location. My first concern is the
10 proximity of the route and the safety of
11 my family and community of Boone Township
12 and Hebron. It's my understanding that
13 the railroad cargo that will travel this
14 path would include highly toxic
15 chemicals. In the event there's a
16 derailment, failure of cargo car, rail
17 crossing accident, it will be virtually
18 impossible for local emergency responders
19 to properly address the catastrophic
20 event in a manner that would protect my
21 family and community from the effects of
22 the release of toxic fumes, fire,
23 explosions, up to and including loss of
24 life.

25 If the trains were to travel through

1 the area at the proposed rate of about
2 110 each day or about three every 15
3 minutes, emergency response to a fire,
4 life threatening medical events, heart
5 attack, injury or an accident or any
6 other type of police response, ambulance,
7 fire trucks would be delayed to the point
8 of a life or death situation to be, in
9 effect, fatal to my family, to my
10 neighbors and to the community.

11 Within .1 mile of my driveway is the
12 proposed grade level rail crossing.
13 Standing traffic and vehicles attempting
14 to avoid the constant stoppage will
15 increase traffic congestion and the
16 probability of a train versus vehicle
17 accident or vehicle accidents will
18 definitely increase expedientially
19 directly in front of my home further
20 decreasing the safety of my family, my
21 neighbors and the community.

22 Our community's children will spend
23 longer times traveling on school buses
24 and will now be exposed to rail traffic
25 and a possibility of an accident that

1 would include train traffic. The road
2 would become a constant area of poor
3 repair as train crossings are always in
4 need of repair causing unwanted and
5 unwarranted damage to vehicles and
6 traffic that would pass through the area.

7 The trains, if this were allowed to
8 pass, would travel within 200 feet of my
9 home. I've attached photos, which I will
10 give you. There are many studies,
11 tangibly, statistically documenting the
12 ill effects of train noise, vibration,
13 light to heart rate, cardiovascular
14 health and asthma as it releases
15 pollutants into the area. The studies
16 show that noise vibration and pollution
17 all have negative effects to people that
18 live within the proximity to active rail
19 traffic.

20 In addition to the noise, vibration,
21 pollution and flashing lights, the water
22 area is directly beneath us in the means
23 of a well. These trains will disrupt the
24 natural flow of water and the event of
25 any toxic or chemical spill the supply of

1 water could be completely decimated to
2 the point it becomes contaminated and
3 unusable. In addition -- that was fast.
4 Can I please finish?

5 MS. ZIEMKE: No, please submit your
6 comments online. Jeff (unintelligible)
7 Andrew Kantroski? Andrew, are you here?
8 All right. John Gast?

9 MS. JENNS: My name is Lisa Jenns,
10 J-E-N-N-S, as in Sam. I'm the owner of
11 Stony Run Kennels, which is about two
12 miles north of the crossing on County
13 Line Road and then we're across Route 2,
14 just about a quarter of a mile from my
15 business. I would like to know where you
16 will expect me to go with 38 dogs and how
17 I'm going to provide water for them when
18 our wells are polluted when we have a
19 major accident. And I agree with all of
20 the rest of the comments.

21 I have suggested you view a video
22 that I submitted to the Porter County
23 Drainage Board concerning our water woes
24 down near 231 and County Line Road. I
25 personally took our commissioner -- our

1 former commissioner, Carole Knoblock on a
2 tour of that area and I would be happy to
3 do so for you as well.

4 I'm here to speak to all the
5 audience members. We have beat back two
6 landfills, a shooting range and the
7 Illiana Expressway when it was proposed
8 to come through this same area you're
9 looking at once again. Read our lips, we
10 do not want your problems in our area. I
11 want you all to know that the current
12 head of the Surface Transportation Board
13 was appointed in January of 2015 by
14 President Obama and approved by the
15 Senate in June. It was just after that
16 in November that Mr. Patton started
17 speaking with Illinois representatives
18 regarding this railroad. It was nothing
19 new. In 2013 he was pushing it with the
20 Illiana Expressway. I smell politics
21 here. Look up in December, the Surface
22 Transportation -- the Congress passed a
23 reenactment of something to do with the
24 Surface Transportation Board just this
25 past December.

1 I'm a working woman, that's my
2 pension there that you're playing with.
3 That's all I have. I do not have the
4 luxury and the time that your consulting
5 boards do to investigate this. But we
6 all need to be aware of what's happening
7 behind our backs and we better stick
8 together. We beat these people before
9 and we can do it again. Thank you.

10 MS. ZIEMKE: All right. Jerry Egel.
11 Jerry? Connie Bailey? Jan Lape Austgen?

12 MR. GAST: John Gast, G-A-S-T,
13 landowner, locomotive engineer,
14 legislative representative for the
15 Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers. I
16 can't say I'm for this or against it.
17 But I can see there is a solution to
18 avoid this. First of all, the 110 trains
19 a day, I would have to agree there's
20 probably 110 trains in and out of Chicago
21 a day, I see them -- most of them -- all
22 the time, I hear about them all the time.
23 But that doesn't mean 110 trains are
24 bypassing Chicago. Probably 75 percent
25 of those terminate in Chicago and then

1 the other returning ones out of Chicago.
2 So the need for a bypass, you really got
3 to look at it.

4 Second of all there, the train
5 lengths. People talked about blocking
6 road crossings. By Federal regulations
7 you can only block a road crossing for 10
8 minutes. Let me explain something,
9 that's not when the train stops. That's
10 from the time the gates are activated til
11 the time the gates go up. So if that
12 train's going 10 mile an hour and it's
13 12,000 foot long -- I mean, most of the
14 trains out here are 10,000 to 12,000 feet
15 long, you're not gonna comply with that
16 rule and it's a \$2,000 fine when they
17 assess that to the railroads every year.
18 And then what happens the railroads take
19 that to arbitration and get that knocked
20 down since they got so many -- they got
21 100,000 in road crossing fines, ah, we'll
22 make it 50,000, that happens all the
23 time.

24 And the other thing, you guys are
25 guilty for not doing your job. In

1 Northwest Indiana, particularly Griffith,
2 you've extended the railroad -- a
3 railroad over in that area. How many
4 extensions were blocking road crossings?
5 If you guys would do your job, we
6 wouldn't be looking at this.

7 And, furthermore, most of your
8 right-of-ways in Indiana here are wide
9 enough the county and (unintelligible) as
10 some other speakers have said. So this
11 is really a waste of time and money. I
12 mean, I'm all about organized labor and
13 employment but you can still have the
14 same amount of organized labor and
15 employment in repairing some of these old
16 rail lines. Drainage is already
17 established, drainage wouldn't be issue,
18 everything would be good to go.

19 And the other thing, too, the
20 government's guilty of is train length.
21 Shuts -- 12,000 feet long, that's over
22 two miles, that's ridiculous. Not only
23 that, the longer the trains are the more
24 apt there is to be trouble with that
25 train, with the airline running through

1 the whole train. It's all -- it has to
2 have air throughout the whole train,
3 especially in the wintertime is a
4 problem.

5 The other thing I got to question on
6 here is if it's a true bypass there won't
7 be any connections from point A to point
8 B. I have to agree with what the one
9 speaker said about -- about the location
10 of the expressways and everything. You
11 know, you say -- if it gets -- if it gets
12 put in -- how many years it's gonna be
13 down the road -- I don't care about that
14 30 seconds -- and that's how it's -- the
15 whole thing is it's getting put in and
16 they start needling it down and -- after
17 that.

18 Like I said, everything has to be
19 looked at, check your local -- check the
20 website, go on the FRA website, the STB
21 website, the regulations are on there.
22 Do the research. Do the research on how
23 many trains are coming in and out of
24 Chicago and passing through instead --
25 thank you very much.

1 MS. ZIEMKE: Laura Blaney? Laura?

2 MS. LAPE AUSTGEN: Hello, my name is
3 Jan Lape, L-A-P-E, Austgen,
4 A-U-S-T-G-E-N. I'd first of all like to
5 thank you for allowing this meeting for
6 us to present our concerns about the
7 railroad. We appreciate your kindness.
8 My concerns are many of the 15 given by
9 the board but I'm only going to be
10 addressing three of them that will affect
11 my life.

12 Seeing is believing. So yesterday I
13 took pictures to relate to those issues
14 which are, one, noise and air pollution,
15 land use; two, aesthetic beauty; and,
16 three, water damage of surface water.
17 Because of the limited time, I have
18 compiled photos in numerical order and
19 comments behind each photo. They are
20 organized according to the issues stated
21 and the Board may analyze them at your
22 leisure from the time now until tonight's
23 meeting. You can look through these and
24 at the -- behind each one of the
25 pictures that I have will be my comments

1 so that I would not take up the time.

2 In essence, I oppose the railroad as
3 it will destroy our way of life. One
4 accident causing hazardous waste can be
5 disastrous. We are farmers, we love God,
6 we love our country, we love our families
7 and we love our land. Please allow us
8 the right to keep it and deny the
9 petition for the railroad. Thank you.

10 MS. BLANEY: Laura Blaney, L-A-U-R-A
11 B-L-A-N-E-Y. I'm here as a resident and
12 as a Porter County commissioner. I'd
13 like to say I appreciate you hosting this
14 additional meeting, I know rescheduling
15 things is a lot of work and I think it
16 was well worth it. I also appreciate the
17 comment extension period. However, I'd
18 like to ask for another 30 days. I
19 watched a video last night where Frank
20 Patton was saying he has been working on
21 this plan and this route since 2007 and
22 we just found out about it less than a
23 month ago, the week of Easter. And we
24 have had spring break, we have jobs, we
25 have families, it's planting time for

1 these farmers. We have got graduations.

2 There are 15 categories that you're
3 gonna be looking at that we can all
4 comment on. And both as a resident and
5 especially as a commissioner, there is
6 just not enough time. I mean, we have
7 got some pretty detailed responses from
8 the county in regards to roads and
9 drainage and safety and we also have to
10 run the county. So I'd like to ask for
11 some more time, even though I do
12 appreciate the extension that you have
13 given us.

14 I will keep it at that for now most
15 of our -- my comments personally and as a
16 commissioner will be submitted online.
17 Thank you.

18 MS. ZIEMKE: I'm gonna run through
19 the individuals who didn't come up in
20 case they had stepped out when I called
21 their name so I'm gonna run through those
22 names one more time. Shawn Gesse,
23 Charles Crowder, Sylvia Graham, Mark
24 Vandermolen, Stacy Schmidt, Andrew
25 Kantroski, Jeff Trout, Jerry Egel

1 and Connie Bailey, Jean Gesse.

2 MS. GESSE: I'm Jean Gesse, J-E-A-N
3 G-E-S-S-E. I'm a member of the East
4 Porter County School Corporation school
5 board. As you probably -- most of you
6 know we have three schools in our
7 corporation with the Kouts, Morgan
8 Township and Washington Township. Our
9 taxpayers have chosen to keep our smaller
10 schools and keep our small class sizes.
11 Morgan Township has the distinction of
12 being one of our blue ribbon schools in
13 our corporation.

14 But my major concern concerning the
15 railroad is safety due to the proposed
16 overpass on State Road 49. Since we are
17 a rural school, all of our students are
18 bused or driven by parents entering the
19 school on 300 South, which is one-half
20 mile north of the proposed railroad and
21 overpass. Morgan Township offers a class
22 for the blind and landscaping classes
23 which has students from other county
24 schools entering on 300 South as well.
25 State Road 49 traffic includes semis from

1 Pratt Industries as well as many gravel
2 trucks and gypsum semis daily. It is a
3 heavily traveled highway.

4 Porter County is also in Lake
5 Michigan's snow belt where heavy snow
6 causes early dismissals from school at
7 times due to blinding visibilities. As a
8 school board member, I hope you take into
9 account the safety of our students,
10 teachers, administrators and visitors to
11 Morgan Township School during school
12 hours and athletic and academic events
13 after school hours. Please remember the
14 lives of our students are in your hands.
15 Thank you.

16 MS. ZIEMKE: She's that's the last
17 individual who had marked their card as
18 wanting to give an oral comment today.
19 Is there anyone who thought they had
20 marked oral comment today that didn't get
21 called? I thought you had mentioned
22 earlier. You want to go ahead and give
23 your comment? Is there anyone else who
24 thought they had marked their card to
25 give an oral comment but the weren't

1 called forward?

2 MR. CLEVELAND: My name is Eric
3 Cleveland, C-L-E-V-E-L-A-N-D. And at
4 this time we'd like to have the gentleman
5 Vincent speak on our behalf. He brought
6 up some very good interesting facts.

7 MS. ZIEMKE: I'm sorry, I need -- if
8 you have comments, if you can give your
9 comments --

10 (Too many people talking at once.)

11 MR. KUZNICKI: Wait a second, these
12 people are here to help us, let's not
13 argue, let's relax. Okay. I'll condense
14 it real quick. I did all the math. All
15 right. You guys could check it with EPA.
16 You can go online and find all the
17 information you need. In Porter County
18 we have got about 20 miles of railroad
19 minimum, minimum. Okay? So we are
20 looking at somewhere around 3,600 pounds
21 a day in emissions. Okay? We're not the
22 only ones affected. Because of the wind
23 it's gonna take it all the way across the
24 region. It's gonna push it up into
25 Chicago it's gonna put it into Lake

1 Michigan. Everybody around is affected
2 by this. All right? So it's bad.

3 When they go to build the railroad
4 you're gonna have a lot of dust, not just
5 from the dirt but from the stone it's
6 called pre-silica (sic), it's gonna get
7 in your lungs. My concern is I have two
8 members in my family -- I'm gonna live
9 9/10ths of a mile from the railroad. Two
10 members in my family have extreme asthma,
11 one member oxygen 24/7, a ventilator
12 70 percent of the time. So this affects
13 me and my family severely. Thanks guys.

14 (The following speaker was not present but submitted
15 his comments for transcript.)

16 MR. VANDERMOLEN: Biological
17 Resources. The wildlife around our area
18 is abundant and will be significantly
19 impacted by this proposed rail line.
20 Wildlife such as deer, coyote, rabbit,
21 quail, pheasant, Canadian geese, mallard
22 and wood ducks will be significantly
23 impacted by this proposed railroad. Deer
24 and other wildlife mentioned travel east
25 and west along 500 South routinely. The

1 proposed track is supposed to head south
2 for a section right across this wildlife
3 corridor. This will most certainly
4 impact the way wildlife live and travel
5 through the area.

6 In addition, there is a wetland not
7 too far from the proposed railroad where
8 hundreds of geese and ducks will have to
9 fly right over the train in order to get
10 to the refuge area. The proposed
11 railroad will certainly alter and may
12 deter many, if not all, of these
13 waterfowl from entering this wetland
14 forcing them to find refuge elsewhere.

15 Socioeconomic. In terms of the
16 socioeconomics, the impact will be
17 devastating. Who would want to live near
18 this railroad? No one. This would deter
19 anyone from wanting to move to the area
20 and in many cases incentivize many people
21 to leave. Property values would
22 significantly decrease which would lead
23 to a huge drop in tax dollars that are
24 used to support our local schools and are
25 used to better our community.

1 Aesthetics. In terms of aesthetics,
2 this railroad will absolutely negatively
3 impact the aesthetics of your landscape.
4 I ask the Board to consider the fact that
5 this impact will be permanent. This
6 countryside is becoming increasingly rare
7 and should be viewed as an invaluable
8 commodity that no one can put a price on.
9 Efforts should be made to protect this
10 beautiful countryside that our children
11 and their families should be able to
12 enjoy and appreciate in the years to
13 come. I, again, ask the Board to
14 consider the long-term impact this
15 proposed railroad would have not only to
16 our generation, but to the generations to
17 come.

18 Safety. This train is proposed to
19 cross the Buckeye Pipeline, a line that
20 runs petroleum, gas, among other
21 potentially harmful substances. I have
22 personally measured the depth of this
23 100-year old pipeline and in some areas
24 it is less than a foot under ground. I
25 ask the Board if they would consider a

1 high speed train carrying harmful
2 substances routinely crossing a 100-year
3 old pipeline which carries harmful,
4 highly explosive substances as well would
5 be considered safe? Especially when it
6 is so close to the local elementary
7 school. I believe it is obvious the
8 potential devastating consequences this
9 could have. I have read that they
10 propose to incase the pipeline in
11 concrete where the train will cross it.
12 This seems to be an almost insulting
13 solution to minimizing this high risk
14 situation. What evidence exists that
15 this method would eliminate the potential
16 devastation consequences of a derailment
17 across the pipeline?

18 I also would like to speak on behalf
19 of the children in the area that ride
20 their bikes and play and act like
21 children who enjoy their community and
22 the area that they live in. I ask the
23 Board to consider how their lives and
24 their childhood would be impacted. We
25 parents around the area would be forced

1 to significantly alter the way we raise
2 our children in the area restricting them
3 from areas that they currently enjoy due
4 to the numerous safety concerns. An area
5 that our children enjoy to explore and
6 grow up in would be an area that is
7 restricted from them to play around. All
8 for the private gain of a private
9 company.

10 Noise and vibration. As far as the
11 impact on noise, this proposed railroad
12 would significantly alter our current
13 peaceful countryside environment that we
14 have enjoyed and appreciated over the
15 years. My wife and I purchased land here
16 almost 20 years ago with hopes and dreams
17 of raising our children in a quiet,
18 peaceful, safe, countryside environment.
19 Porter County has lived up to everything
20 we have hoped for in raising our family.
21 This proposed railroad would destroy
22 everything my family has worked so hard
23 to achieve. This would destroy our
24 American dream. This railroad would be a
25 few hundred yards to the east of our home

1 then wrap around to the south a few
2 hundred yards surrounding us on two
3 sides. Gone would be the peaceful,
4 tranquil times on our property that our
5 family has grown to enjoy so much. Gone
6 would be the quiet times on the porch.
7 Gone would be the quiet times on the
8 children's play set. Gone would be the
9 restful nights sleeping with the windows
10 open listening to the wildlife outdoors.
11 We would be forced to sleep with our
12 windows shut in order to muffle some of
13 the constant noise pollution of a
14 rumbling train and hope that our children
15 would be able to get a good night's
16 sleep. What quality of life would this
17 bring to our community? I ask that the
18 Board put yourselves in our situation and
19 consider how destructive this railroad
20 would be. What would you want for you,
21 your families, your children and your
22 neighbors in this situation?

23 Close. I respectfully ask the Board
24 to reject the proposed railroad and all
25 of the devastating, permanent effects it

1 will most certainly have on our
2 community. Let it be very clear that we
3 as a community do not want this private
4 railroad to ever enter Porter County
5 Indiana.

6 It is my understanding that eminent
7 domain is enforced for the "greater good"
8 of the people. There exists no doubt
9 that this proposed private railroad would
10 not be for the greater good for my
11 family, for our land, for the wildlife,
12 or for our community as a whole in Porter
13 County. I would like to thank you for
14 your time and thank you in advance for
15 not allowing this railroad to exist in
16 Porter County.

17 MS. ZIEMKE: Thank you, everyone,
18 for your comments. For those of who
19 didn't give oral comments today, we
20 encourage you to please submit your
21 written comments. As Dave mentioned, the
22 comment period has been extended to June
23 15th. And those you of who did give oral
24 comments, if you have more comments we
25 encourage you to also submit those

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comments, please. Thank you.

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(Meeting was adjourned at 12:36 p.m.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Michelle D. Soffa, Notary Public in and for
the County of Porter and State of Indiana, hereby
certify the foregoing pages were reported by me and they
comprise a full, true and correct transcript of the
Public Scoping Meeting for the EIS on the Great Lakes
Basin Rail Line, taken on April 12, 2016.



Michelle D. Soffa
Notary Public, State of Indiana
Residence: Porter County
My Commission Expires: 01-31-24

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