

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

*Lowell, IN
April 12, 2016*

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

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

3
4 Date: Tuesday, April 12, 2016

5 Time: 5:31 p.m.

6 Place: Veterans of Foreign Wars
7 17401 Morse Street
8 Lowell, Indiana 46356

9
10 The proceedings of the above-mentioned and
11 foregoing matter taken pursuant to notice as to the
12 time and place.

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17 Reported by
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19 Notary Public, State of 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 MR. NAVECKY: Good evening. My name is Dave Navecky.
2 I'm with the Surface Transportation Board. Thank you for
3 coming this evening. I just wanted to briefly run through
4 what the format of today's -- or this evening's meeting
5 and how it's going to be operated.

6 Our intention is the first hour of tonight's meeting
7 is more of an open house question and answer timeframe for
8 you folks to go back and look at the maps that we have in
9 the back of the room of the alignment in this project
10 area. We have poster boards explaining the environmental
11 review process. And you can come -- there are ten of us
12 here this evening to help you. There are two of us from
13 the Surface Transportation Board, myself, Dave Navecky;
14 and Phillis Johnson-Ball is roaming around somewhere.
15 She's in the back.

16 And then we have eight folks with ICF International.
17 They're a consulting firm that are helping us in this
18 process. So anyone that has one of these name tags on
19 them, we encourage you to come up to us and ask us
20 questions about the project, about our process. We'd be
21 happy to go over that with you.

22 After the open house format, I'm going to give a
23 brief presentation about our process and how we're going
24 to be moving forward on the environmental review. That
25 will last about 15 minutes.

1 Then we'll have the oral comment portion of the
2 meeting where folks will be invited to come up to the
3 microphone and provide their comments to us about the
4 project. So that's the format. I encourage you to take
5 advantage of us for the next hour or so and pester us with
6 questions and concerns that you have before we get to the
7 more formal portion of the meeting. Thank you.

8 (Break.)

9 MS. ZIEMKE: All right. Can I have everyone's
10 attention, please? First I'd like to thank everyone for
11 coming tonight. It's a big crowd. We did decide to start
12 a little bit early so that we could get things moving.
13 And we apologize there's not enough seats for everyone.
14 Before we get going, if everyone could please turn off
15 their cell phones or turn them to vibrate, that would be
16 appreciated. And I just want to give you an idea of what
17 we're doing here tonight in tonight's meeting.

18 It's going to be in two parts. The first part will
19 be a presentation, last about 15 minutes. And then once
20 that's finished, we'll have an oral comment period. And
21 once Dave's finished reading the presentation, I'll give
22 you the guidelines for the presentation or the oral
23 comments.

24 So with that said, I'd like to introduce Dave
25 Navecky. Dave is with the Surface Transportation Board,

1 Office of Environmental Analysis, and he is the project
2 lead for the Great Lakes Basin.

3 MR. NAVECKY: Thank you. Again, my name is Dave
4 Navecky. I'm with the Surface Transportation Board, the
5 Office of Environmental Analysis. And I am the project
6 lead, but for the Environmental Impact Statement. I'm not
7 a project lead for the rail line project itself, just to
8 clarify.

9 Welcome to our public scoping meeting. Again, this
10 is for the EIS, for the proposed rail line. And I thank
11 everybody for coming this evening. Thank you. Thank
12 everybody for coming this evening. I apologize that we
13 don't have enough space. We changed venues once, and
14 apparently we should have tried it again. So thank you
15 for coming and thanks for those standing in the back.

16 Next slide, please. Our agenda for this evening,
17 we'll go through some introductions; and then we'll go
18 through an overview of who the Surface Transportation
19 Board is along with what our EIS, Environmental Impact
20 Statement, process will entail, then discuss the purpose
21 and need of the proposed rail line and go into the
22 description of what's been proposed by the Great Lakes
23 Basin folks. And then we're going to go over some
24 resources that are available to help you comment and be
25 involved in this project that are available on the Board's

1 website and a project website that we've set up for our
2 EIS effort.

3 Introductions, I've introduced myself. And also this
4 evening we have Phillis Johnson-Ball with the Surface
5 Transportation Board. She's the deputy director of the
6 Office of Environmental Analysis. Phillis, raise your
7 hand.

8 And then also with us tonight is a team of folks. We
9 have eight folks this evening from a consulting firm
10 that's helping us prepare this EIS. We're a small agency.
11 We only have 150 people, and we only have 10 people in our
12 environmental office. And it would take us decades if we
13 tried to do this review ourselves. So ICF International
14 is assisting us in preparing the EIS. At the table we
15 have their project manager for EIS, Alan Summerville. And
16 there are seven others scattered around the room with
17 their name tags.

18 Next slide, please. An overview of the Surface
19 Transportation Board and the EIS process. The Surface
20 Transportation Board sometimes will refer to ourselves as
21 the STB or the Board. It's a small federal agency with
22 jurisdiction over the freight railroad industry in the
23 United States. And with that jurisdiction, any railroad
24 that wants to construct and operate a new rail line in the
25 country must get authority from our agency to do so. In

1 reviewing that request to construct and operate a new rail
2 line, the board considers -- actually it kind of goes down
3 two paths of review.

4 One, it looks at the transportation merits of the
5 project, and it also goes and looks at the potential
6 environmental impacts of the project. And that's what I'm
7 here for today is to -- we're kicking off the
8 environmental review process. The board will then take
9 the outcome of those two reviews, one on transportation
10 the merits and the other on the potential environmental
11 impacts, consider those issues; and then they will make a
12 decision on whether to approve, approve with conditions,
13 or deny the request to construct the proposed rail line.

14 Next slide please. The first step in our
15 environmental review process is referred to as scoping.
16 And what we're trying to do there is -- what we're trying
17 to do there is scope out the document. We're trying to
18 identify the issues that we need to study in the EIS.
19 We've been doing this for years, and we know what some of
20 the issues are; but I'm not from Indiana, I'm not from
21 Illinois, I'm not from Wisconsin. And there are unique
22 issues to every community and every state. And so we come
23 out to the communities and ask you to help identify for us
24 the issues that we need to address in our environmental
25 study.

1 And we've been hearing some -- this is our third
2 meeting. We had one last night, one this morning, and
3 we're hearing some good stuff as far as potential impacts
4 per se. But it's good information for us to have and
5 knowing what we need to look at when we go into our
6 environmental review, the impacts of farm operations and
7 impacts to drainage tile, impacts to soils, and things
8 like that. So we're getting good information from you
9 folks.

10 Also in scoping, we like for you to suggest
11 alternative routes for the proposed rail line that you
12 might have in mind. You know, why don't you go over this
13 way and you'll avoid this soil, or why don't you go over
14 this way to avoid the town's wells, or something of that
15 nature.

16 We're looking for that information as well. We're
17 also looking for suggestions on potential mitigation.
18 Well, if this rail line is built, we think the rail line
19 should be required to do this, to mitigate these impacts.
20 We're looking for suggestions in that manner as well. So
21 we'll take all that information we get from you folks.
22 And we're also soliciting the scoping comments from the
23 federal, state, and local agencies also so we get the
24 input from the agencies with that expertise.

25 And we'll then come up and come up with a final scope

1 of study for the Environmental Impact Statements, kind of
2 our outline of what we're going to be looking into over
3 the next couple of years. Then that final scope of study
4 will also identify the alternatives that we're going to
5 study in the EIS. We'll be studying the rail line, the
6 route that's been proposed by the Great Lakes Basin
7 Transportation folks.

8 And I need to stress that the lines that you see on
9 the maps have come from the Great Lakes Basin folks. It's
10 not our rail line. It's not our project. We also look at
11 the alternative routes that we come up with with your
12 help. And we will also look at the no action alternative,
13 which is not to build the rail line. So all those --

14 All those alternatives will be treated equally in the
15 document. So if we come up with alternative routes for
16 the rail line, those will be reviewed in as great a detail
17 as the route that was proposed by the Great Lakes Basin
18 folks.

19 Next slide, please. The next step for us is to
20 prepare the draft Environmental Impact Statement. That's
21 where we implement the scope of study. That will require
22 a lot of data collection from all the communities and the
23 three affected states. We'll be doing some modeling,
24 computer modeling. We'll be doing some other analytical
25 -- using some other analytical tools. We'll probably be

1 doing some visual simulations. We'll be doing noise
2 modeling, things like that.

3 We will also be developing preliminary mitigation to
4 mitigate the potential impacts that we've identified in
5 our analysis. We'll take all that information, and we'll
6 issue that as a draft Environmental Impact Statement. And
7 everybody that is -- that has signed up on our
8 notification list will be notified when that document is
9 available. And you'll be able to go online and review
10 that document. And we're going to request again that you
11 provide us comments on that document, is there something
12 we missed, did we not hit the topic that you wanted us to
13 address, or we didn't quite get your meaning of your
14 scoping comment, did you find any errors -- I hope we
15 don't have any errors -- those type of things.

16 We'll come out here again, and I promise we'll have a
17 bigger venue for when we come back. We'll come back to
18 get comments from everybody. It will be a period where
19 you can come up again to the microphone and provide us
20 comments on what you found in the draft EIS.

21 Next slide. So we'll take all those comments and
22 we'll also be getting written comments from everybody.
23 I've already gotten a lot of written comments from you
24 folks, and we'll take all the written comments on the
25 draft EIS, from you folks, as well as from all the

1 agencies and -- we always get comments from all the local,
2 state and federal agencies on how well we did or did not
3 do on the EIS and their perspective. And we'll find out
4 what we need to do.

5 Some of the comments -- we'll reply to all of them in
6 the final EIS. Some of them may just require some
7 clarification on a topic, or it might be something that's
8 going to be a large document page wise. There's going to
9 be a lot of stuff in there. There are going to be some
10 technical appendices. So there might be questions about
11 information that's already in there. So our response
12 might be just directing you to the proper chapter and page
13 in the document where you can find that information.

14 Some of it might require us to do some additional new
15 analytical work or new modeling in order to address the
16 comment appropriately. And some of it might require us to
17 come back out in the field to do some additional field
18 work in order to address those comments.

19 And we'll take all that new information and
20 additional work we might have needed to do, and we'll
21 issue the final Environmental Impact Statement. And,
22 again, you'll all be notified when that is available. In
23 the final EIS, the group I work in within the agency, the
24 Office of Environmental Analysis, will identify a
25 preferred alternative based on the environmental

1 considerations.

2 And we will also recommend what will likely be a
3 lengthy list of mitigation that should be imposed on this
4 project if it were approved and if it goes forward. That
5 preferred alternative and that environmental mitigation
6 appears as recommendations to our board. The board is
7 currently a three-member panel that will be going up to
8 five probably sometime later this year or next year. And
9 the board will take our recommendations on the preferred
10 alternative and mitigation, and it will consider the
11 entire environmental record, including the draft EIS, your
12 comments on the draft EIS, and the contents of the final
13 EIS.

14 And they'll also, again, consider the transportation
15 merits of the project. And they will make a decision on
16 whether or not to approve, approve with conditions, or to
17 deny the proposed rail line.

18 Next, any other federal agencies that need to make
19 decisions, if the board were to approve the project, then
20 any other federal agencies that need to make decisions on
21 the project will make their decisions. For example, there
22 will likely need to be a decision from the U.S. Army Corps
23 of Engineers related to the wetland impacts. There will
24 need to be a decision from the U.S. Coast Guard for the
25 bridges over the larger rivers. And there will likely be

1 some others. So they will end up needing to make
2 decisions as well.

3 Next slide, please. The purpose and need, what we
4 labeled in here, this is called the applicant's purpose
5 and need because this is not our project. We did not come
6 up with this idea. We are not -- the Surface
7 Transportation Board is not proposing that this rail line
8 be constructed. We're a licensing agency, and we respond
9 to requests that come before our agency for authority to
10 construct and operate.

11 So what the Great Lakes Basin Transportation folks
12 have provided us is -- I think most of you may be familiar
13 with this -- is that they -- the purpose of the project is
14 to provide Class I railroads, and there are six, that they
15 would interchange with this proposed rail line, provide
16 the Class I railroads in a region of railroad that utilize
17 the Chicago metropolitan area rail network with more
18 efficient rail operations by enabling freight traffic to
19 bypass the congested Chicago rail network. And also the
20 project, they believe would provide capacity to the
21 regional rail network to accommodate existing and
22 potential future rail traffic while avoiding major
23 population centers.

24 Again, these are coming from the Great Lakes Basin
25 folks. These are not coming from us. And these are some

1 of the topics that our agency will consider under the
2 transportation merits of the review.

3 Next page, please. The applicant's proposed action,
4 again, this is coming from the Great Lakes folks. This is
5 what they're proposing. They currently have a rail line
6 that is about 278 miles long, some of it with the single
7 tracks. And I think that's mostly in the ends and
8 Northwest Indiana and in Southern Wisconsin. The majority
9 of it would be double track. It would be two side-by-side
10 tracks. And there would be a section of it that would be
11 triple tracks, and that's in the area of Manteno.

12 The rail line, again, would extend Northwestern
13 Illinois through -- Northwest Indiana, I'm sorry, through
14 Illinois up into Southern Wisconsin. They also propose to
15 construct and operate a rail terminal near Manteno that
16 would provide switching, servicing, and car and locomotive
17 repair for both its equipment and the equipment of its
18 rail customers.

19 Next slide, please. Here's the map of the proposed
20 rail line. This is all maps in the back, and it's on our
21 brochure. It starts up in Northwestern Indiana down
22 through Illinois, extends north through Illinois, has a
23 subdivision that branches off to the west side of
24 Rockford, but the main line continues north up into
25 Southern Wisconsin and ending near Milton, Wisconsin, east

1 of Janesville.

2 Next slide, please. Now, we wanted to provide you
3 with some information on two websites that we have
4 available for you that will have resources that will help
5 you participate in our project and be informed about the
6 project. This one here is the home page of my agency's
7 regular website, and the address is provided on the
8 brochure that you have there. It's www.stb.dot.gov.

9 And I know you won't be able to see this, especially
10 those way in the back and maybe even some of you in front.
11 But up here in the upper left, we have a blue bar across
12 the top with some buttons that access different
13 information and resources on our website. The one in the
14 far left is called E-Filing. And that's where you can go
15 to electronically file your comments about the proposed
16 project with us.

17 You go through there. You click on E-Filing. You'll
18 see on the right it says, "Environmental Comments." You
19 click on that, and then you write your name and any other
20 information you want to provide us. Some you may or may
21 not want to provide addresses, whatever you feel
22 comfortable with. And there will be a box in there where
23 you can actually type in your comments.

24 And from what I've been getting so far, that box
25 won't be large enough for most of you. So you're able to

1 provide attachments on that page. You can attach a Word
2 document. You can attach a PDF. You can attach JPEGs if
3 there's pictures of resources you want us to be aware of.
4 So you have a number of options. You also can just mail
5 the comments to us through regular U.S. Mail. And my
6 address is on the back of the brochure that we have
7 available for you folks.

8 Another thing is we try to maintain a transparent
9 process as far as communications coming to us and leaving
10 our agency. So there's a location on our website where
11 all the comments that you folks are providing on this
12 project are going up on our website. So if you want to go
13 in there and see what other folks are saying, what other
14 people's comments are, if you want to see what the state
15 agency, one of your state agencies is saying about the
16 project, you can go in there and find that on our website.
17 And that appears about in the middle of that blue bar.
18 It's a button called "Environmental Matters." You put
19 your cursor on it. Then you get a drop-down menu. And
20 there's a button called "Environmental Correspondence,"
21 and then that will take you to where you can search for
22 correspondence on this project.

23 And it's a docket number, but it's really a project
24 number that we use. It's the 35952. You would search by
25 that number to find the outgoing -- incoming and outgoing

1 correspondence. So you'll be able to see anything that we
2 write to agencies. So anything that we're writing to the
3 Great Lakes Basin folks, you can see what we're saying to
4 them, what information we're requesting of them to help us
5 as we go through this process.

6 Next slide, please. Now, we've also -- this is a
7 complicated process. And so we've also developed a
8 project website to help get the information out to you
9 folks and explain how the process works. And I think it
10 has a lot of information on it here that you'll find
11 useful.

12 One, perhaps, is the map. We have a maps page. So
13 all the maps you'll see we have some large maps laid out
14 on the tables in the back. Those are all available on
15 that maps page. You can go in there and tool around and
16 look at whatever you want to look at. We also have the
17 map available in Google Earth. That's viewable on Google
18 Earth if any folks are familiar with Google Earth. If you
19 don't have Google Earth, it's a free software program you
20 can download. And once you have it on your computer, you
21 just click on this file we have available for you. And it
22 will open up Google Earth automatically, and you can zoom
23 around and really get down and look -- really close in and
24 look at your property.

25 And that file has the alignment on it, the proposed

1 alignment that you see in the maps back there. So you'll
2 be able to see up close the proposed right-of-way based on
3 the alternative that the applicant has proposed, how close
4 their route is to your home, to your farm, to the school
5 your kids go to, whatever your concerns might be.

6 We have a page here called related links and
7 documents, and we're putting key documents on there that
8 you might be interested in. For example, on March 7th
9 last month, the Great Lakes folks provided us with a bunch
10 of information, including the maps for the map files that
11 you see back there. They provided some narrative
12 describing the project, and they also describe how they
13 came up with the alignment along certain sections of the
14 rail line. It's about a 20-page document. So you might
15 be interested in going in and reading that in detail.

16 Let's see. We also point out here while it's up
17 here, we're having -- we're going to also have an online
18 meeting similar to this one for folks that could not make
19 it to any of these public meetings in person. If you have
20 neighbors or friends or family members that wanted to come
21 tonight but couldn't come tonight or they can't make any
22 of the other meetings, we're having an online meeting.

23 That will be on Wednesday, April 27th, two weeks from
24 tomorrow. It will be similar to what we're doing tonight.
25 I'll go through the same presentation with them online.

1 And they can register if they'd like to speak. And
2 everybody that logs into this meeting, it's going to be a
3 Webinar type format. Everybody that's logged in will be
4 able to hear the person speaking, what their comments are.
5 And we'll hand off the microphone from person to person
6 based on who's registered to provide comments. So that's
7 another opportunity for people to participate. Even if
8 you came tonight and you have some new thoughts and want
9 to participate in that online meeting, you're welcome to
10 do that as well.

11 I think that's about it on the slides, and I think
12 that's it for the presentation. And Laura's going to
13 explain how the comment portion of the meeting is going to
14 work.

15 MS. ZIEMKE: So we'll take a couple minutes here
16 to move things back. While they're doing that, we did
17 find a cell phone back on one of the map tables.

18 This begins the comment portion of our meeting
19 tonight. If you didn't put a check mark on your card, we
20 won't be calling your name tonight. So if there's anyone
21 out there that wanted to speak this evening but didn't put
22 a checkmark on their card, if you could raise your hand.

23 All right. Is there anyone who came in tonight and
24 did not put a checkmark, yet they wanted to give a
25 comment? All right. Raise your hand and Tiffany's going

1 to bring you a card. Raise your hand high so she can find
2 you. And I'll ask again when we're finished with the
3 process. If we missed you right now, we'll catch you
4 again.

5 So we have a court reporter here tonight. She will
6 be transcribing everything that is said. So as we call
7 people forward, if you can please clearly state your name
8 and spell your name for her, and we're going to have you
9 come up to this table here. And if you can face that
10 direction, it makes it easier for her to hear you and get
11 it transcribed.

12 Also, if you're with an organization, after you state
13 your name, say the organization that you're with. Each
14 speaker will have three minutes. And you don't have to
15 speak for three minutes. But if you do speak the full
16 three minutes, Tiffany is going to be sitting right up
17 front here; and she will hold up a card for you just to
18 let you know when you get to -- when you have 30 seconds
19 left to speak. And if you do get to three minutes, I'm
20 going to be back behind, and I will come and just tap you
21 on the shoulder and remind you that your time is up.

22 And we do ask everyone to please be respectful of the
23 three-minute limit. There are about 40 people who would
24 like to speak tonight. So we want to make sure everybody
25 gets their opportunity to hear the comments. If you have

1 more -- you can't hear? If you have more than three
2 minutes worth to talk about, I would recommend that you
3 say what you think is most important up front and make
4 sure you turn the rest of your comments in in writing.

5 If time permits at the end, we will let other people
6 who would like to have a chance to speak to come up and
7 speak.

8 The other thing I just wanted to point out is that
9 tonight is about you coming forward and giving your
10 comments orally. We are not going to be taking questions.
11 It's not a question and answer time. After the comments
12 are made, people are welcome to come up and talk with
13 Phillis and Dave or anyone else here and ask questions.
14 So with that I'd like to -- we're going to start with our
15 elected officials who are here tonight.

16 I'm going to ask two people to come up at a time.
17 The second person I'm going to have take a seat right here
18 just so we can keep the process moving. So I'd like to
19 call up Gerry Scheub and also Eldon Strong. And, Eldon,
20 if you can come over here to the back.

21 MR. SCHEUB: Gerry Scheub, S-c-h-e-u-b, President
22 of the Lake County Commissioners. We along with Porter
23 County has signed a resolution against this proposal.
24 Lowell Elementary School, Buckley Homestead, Porter
25 County, they're all backed up to this right-of-way which

1 Mr. Patton said they wouldn't come near anything. So he
2 lied right away.

3 Noise, vibration, bells, whistles will definitely
4 affect the ability for students to concentrate and
5 comprehend with the continuous train traffic. Special
6 needs children would have to be transferred to other
7 schools causing stress on the children and a lot of time
8 on the parents. School buses would have to be rerouted.
9 It would take more time because of the railroad crossings.

10 Chemical spills, very dangerous, would affect the
11 schools, Buckley, churches in the area. And Lowell is not
12 equipped to go after this type of disaster. Lowell would
13 have to have another police station, fire station because
14 the tracks would separate the town and the unincorporated
15 area.

16 Drainage would be affected tremendously, loss of
17 ability for surface water to flow south, cost of traps
18 lost because the north side would flood, breeding areas
19 for mosquitos, which we all know it's getting worse every
20 year. The Kankakee River and watershed, the wetlands
21 would be affected, the wildlife, the plants, the fish and
22 game, it would be disastrous for that area.

23 All homes in Lowell and in the unincorporated area
24 depend on well water. They don't have Lake Michigan
25 water. So any spill to this aquifer would be totally

1 disastrous for our area.

2 Irrigation systems for the farmers could be cut off
3 in half. All their equipment would be lost that they
4 have. Who's going to pay for this? It's important.
5 South Lake County is the fastest growing -- one of the
6 fastest growing areas in the state. This would kill any
7 future growth. It would annihilate home value. It would
8 kill us.

9 I know all the people here are against it. And all
10 we're asking the STB is to deny this permit. It is
11 environmentally unsafe. Quality of life would be
12 devastated, and we have an alternate route which
13 eliminates this altogether in Porter and Lake County. It
14 takes it out of here completely. And I would like --
15 (inaudible) -- two new members on the board. Thank you.

16 MR. STRONG: My name is Eldon Strong. I
17 represent the Lake County Council, 7th District. And the
18 7th District is the heart of where this proposed rail line
19 will go through. I oppose this project. I would like to
20 state the reasons why. As a local elected official, I was
21 never contacted about this project until our county
22 planning -- plan commission director received this e-mail.
23 This is about two weeks ago. We should have known about
24 this well in advance.

25 I believe this is a bad plan and one that's doomed to

1 failure. Local residents are not in support of this, and
2 neither am I. I don't believe utilizing existing rail
3 beds is the answer either. I foresee no economic
4 development in this project for our community. And as a
5 retired 35-year police officer and a former township
6 trustee, I foresee road blockages resulting in cut-off
7 emergency services, school bus delays, drainage problems.
8 And I see a severe local impact on the local government
9 for these same emergency services. I see the builder only
10 as the one that will reaping the benefit from this
11 project, and the taxpayers will be paying. I'm saying
12 don't build. Thank you.

13 MS. ZIEMKE: Thank you. And it was just pointed
14 out to me that we have State Senator Rick Niemeyer here as
15 well, and so if you can come forward for the next comment.

16 MR. EMERSON: My name is Bill Emerson, Jr. I'm
17 the Lake County Surveyor. I've been the Lake County
18 Surveyor for two years now, and I'm also a civil engineer.
19 So I know a little bit about drainage. So that's kind of
20 what I'm going to focus on.

21 And I want to go on the record as saying I'm also not
22 in favor of this project at all. I can take an informal
23 poll here, but I think most of you would agree. I've been
24 lucky in that since I've been in office I've had a great
25 drainage board to work with. And the president of that

1 board is Commissioner Scheub, who is in my ear probably
2 three or four times a week on different drainage problems
3 that we have in the county, such as south county.

4 Lake County is very unique in that if you look at a
5 statewide map of flood plains, the one thing that jumps
6 out is south Lake County. It's a huge flood plain that we
7 live in.

8 And my opinion is that we don't need a railroad run
9 through it that's going to, in essence, create a dam
10 that's another headache that we have to deal with. I've
11 been, you know -- just right behind us, Cedar Creek here
12 by the baseball field here, we just did a project. The
13 farmers here now and probably the everyday person knows
14 the soil types in this area and increased water, diverting
15 water, and putting it in one area only makes it worse. So
16 that's where I stand on it.

17 I think it's something that -- I'm having flashbacks
18 to, quite frankly, the Illiana Expressway where I got a
19 letter from the engineer for the state saying, "Hi, Bill,"
20 you know, I think I was in office for two months or
21 something. And they said, you know, we'd like you to
22 waive all your requirements under your ordinance for
23 storage and, you know, all those kind of drainage issues,
24 just waive those requirements for us. And if we don't
25 hear back from you in five days, we'll assume you waived

1 it.

2 They received a letter back from me very quickly, as
3 you can imagine. I didn't even have to call Commissioner
4 Scheub because I knew it'd probably give him a heart
5 attack. So I just sent the letter out right away. But
6 I'm getting the same feeling. We need to make sure that
7 everything is looked at closely if it does come in. And I
8 think looking at the map myself, the proposed map, it dips
9 down so far south -- and I'm not looking to push this on
10 our neighbors in Newton County or Jasper County. But you
11 look at it, it dips down so far south in Illinois already,
12 go right across.

13 This is an area, like I said, has a lot of water
14 problems. I know about it. I was out today on the
15 Singleton Ditch. That's why I'm so red. I'm also nervous
16 speaking, but I'm just red because I'm sunburned because I
17 was in Singleton Ditch today. So I think my time is up,
18 but I want to go on the record saying I'm opposed to it.
19 Thank you.

20 MR. NIEMEYER: I'm Rick Niemeyer,
21 N-i-e-m-e-y-e-r, State Senate, District 6, which covers
22 this area. Before my time in the state senate and as a
23 state rep, I served on local boards for many years in Lake
24 County on the planning commission on the drainage issues.

25 One thing that jumps out at me right away is the

1 economic development that is going to kill us in the south
2 county area. We worked very hard on the planning
3 commission in getting hobby farms, commercial, small
4 businesses, and protecting the farms for years. And now
5 this plan is going to come in and change that forever for
6 that zoning and our master plan for this area.

7 It's going to kill south county's economic
8 development. I don't know whose economic development this
9 is going to help, but it sure isn't going to help south
10 county as we go forward.

11 I looked at the drainage issue. I see the drainage
12 advisory council is here representing West Creek Township.
13 We spent over \$5 million in the last six, seven years in
14 this Kankakee Basin digging out ditches, making drainage
15 work, and making sure it got to the right proper drainage
16 as fast as it could so we didn't have drainage problems.
17 This is going to alter all of that. It's going to dissect
18 that system. It's going to have to be redone. We're
19 going to be pushing water back to the north because it's
20 not going to be draining properly. And we're going to
21 flood fields on the other side of the north side. We're
22 going to have to reorganize that part of our drainage
23 issue.

24 The other thing I look at is the eminent domain power
25 that this private company could have. It's a 273-mile

1 rail. And if they get this approved and they go forward,
2 they have eminent domain power over our ground and our
3 farm ground. And they can come in and do what they need
4 to do to get that and it's a 200-foot right-of-way.

5 So that issue, I'm looking as an elected official on
6 that -- and Steve's going to talk on that issue also, this
7 eminent domain issue. That has to be looked at giving a
8 private company that long of a corridor to even try to do
9 something with it.

10 I look at we're trying to take care of a Chicago
11 problem again, you know, that it takes too long for a car
12 to get up there and get switched and get back out again.
13 That's just the way it is. Why use our area to keep
14 taking care of problems that we didn't create. This is a
15 private venture. This is a money venture. This has
16 nothing to do with helping out government. This is a
17 private entity trying to make money on this.

18 And there's a good possibility this gentleman -- he
19 has no railroad experience. If he gets this done and he
20 sells his property or this business to someone else to use
21 this -- we got to be very careful.

22 And the other issue, you know, we have the schools
23 and the water fields. There's going to be people talking
24 about those issues a lot tonight, the well water stuff.
25 And we all know that our emergency services stuff, we work

1 on that every day down here. So that's a big issue.

2 There's a lot of negative stuff here. And I just
3 want to tell you as an elected official whether you're
4 local, state, or federal, boards and stuff that are
5 created to do these things are created by legislation and
6 statutes. So to say we have no say in this is not true.
7 We have a big say in it, and we need to make that voice
8 very loud and clear on our level, whether it's a state
9 level, a federal level, or a local level.

10 And I think you're going to see by the elected
11 officials that talk here tonight of where we stand on this
12 issue. I don't support tweaking this to anybody else at
13 this point. I'm not an expert. I don't think you are in
14 the crowd of where it might be better, who we're going to
15 push this on to, to Shelby or Schneider or any other
16 areas. I don't think that's my job to find an alternate
17 route for these people. I don't have that expertise. I
18 don't like this plan, and I'm not supporting it.

19 MR. CARTER: Steve Carter, S-t-e-v-e,
20 C-a-r-t-e-r. I come as a citizen tonight, but also
21 someone with a little bit of background in public policy
22 and state laws.

23 First of all, with regard to the public policy, it's
24 been mentioned how the notice for some of the information
25 has been abbreviated. People have had a short time to

1 collect their thoughts and present their comments. But
2 that needs to change. Every entity that has some
3 potential impact, every board, every agency, every
4 council, every body that has some impact needs to have the
5 opportunity to present a community impact statement that
6 addresses how what they do is affected by this proposal in
7 their community.

8 The second thing we need to think about is this
9 process. You know, across the country, people on both the
10 left and the right are concerned about officials not
11 listening to them. So we've got an opportunity for
12 officials in Washington to listen to the public. So
13 please take advantage of that opportunity. The last one I
14 want to talk about is a little bit about the eminent
15 domain laws that Rick touched upon.

16 This is billed as the biggest rail project in maybe a
17 hundred years. If it's a hundred-year project, doesn't it
18 deserve more than a few days or a few weeks of analysis?
19 We adopted a constitution in Indiana in the 1850s. And
20 since then we've had eminent domain, condemnation laws
21 develop. There may be emergency situations, not this
22 situation, but there may be others where that's necessary.
23 But it's not necessary in this case.

24 And we certainly need to have the opportunity to
25 update those laws so that they're equipped for this

1 century and the next century. You know, this kind of
2 proposal if it went through isn't going to be one that
3 just affects this generation sitting here tonight. It
4 will affect many generations in the future to come.

5 So we've got to have the opportunity for our state
6 legislature, our state leadership, state officers, whoever
7 they are after this next election to step forward and
8 address those new laws that need to be modified at least.
9 Thank you.

10 MR. BLANKENSHIP: My name is Dan Blankenship,
11 B-l-a-n-k-e-n-s-h-i-p. I'm currently the Cedar Creek
12 Township President, board president that represents 12,000
13 people and a 60-square-mile radius.

14 Since this happened two weeks ago, we all just got
15 some word on it. I've had one person say that they
16 support this, and that person thought it was going to be a
17 commuter rail. They didn't know. So not one other person
18 that I've talked to in my area in the past week and a half
19 or so has said they're for this.

20 It's amazing the restraint and respect this audience
21 has shown, especially some of the stuff that's been
22 written in the paper. Patton said that this railroad was
23 an undertaking, the biggest one in 110 years and said
24 we'll be breaking ground in 18 months.

25 As we've all heard tonight, there needs to be a lot

1 more investigation, and I think that was a very
2 antagonistic comment by the builder of this railroad.

3 Our area has no other source of water than wells. We
4 live too far away from Lake Michigan to get water from
5 them. If we were to have a big accident with a derailment
6 and our water's contaminated, we have no options. So
7 that's a huge thing for everyone to be concerned about.

8 The inability for emergency services to handle a
9 derailment or fire is -- we have three fire departments,
10 Lowell, Shelby, and Lake Dale; and all stretched to the
11 limit now financially. People wise, we don't have the
12 same amount of volunteer firefighters we've had. This is
13 just a bad situation sprung on us without much -- you
14 know, none of us knew this was coming until a week and a
15 half or two ago. And I hope that if they can extend the
16 period that we can continue to make our voices heard, I
17 hope that you guys will. And that's it. Thank you.

18 MR. MAKKA: Yes, my name is Lawrence Maka,
19 M-a-k-a. I'm on the board of directors of the Calumet
20 Astronomical Society. We have a number of members here
21 tonight that are opposed to this, and I'll be speaking on
22 their behalf.

23 To try to keep within the time limit, I will just
24 read our statement as it is. Like most people in this
25 room, we are here to object in the strongest terms

1 possible to the proposed railroad right-of-way south of
2 the historic Buckley Homestead County Park in Lowell,
3 Indiana.

4 The Calumet Astronomical Society, which I'll refer to
5 as CAS, is a 501(C)(3) organization. We are working with
6 Purdue University Northwest, the Lake County Parks
7 Department, and the Lake Heritage Parks Foundation to
8 develop the Calumet Astronomy Center located at 191st
9 Avenue and Chase Street in Lowell, Indiana.

10 Presently at this site, CAS operates the Thomas
11 Conway Observatory and the Mildred Hunter Astrophotography
12 Laboratory and is in developmental stages of adding
13 another observatory that will be used for solar observing.

14 The proposed railroad line would come through the
15 land designated for the Calumet Astronomical Center.
16 Astronomical telescopes are extremely sensitive
17 instruments, and they do not -- they not only magnify the
18 night sky, but any vibration they are subjected to is also
19 magnified. Astronomical telescopes have piers set deep in
20 the ground and are not attached in any way to the
21 building.

22 Since footsteps alone would cause the image to
23 vibrate, we can only imagine that a freight train passing
24 within 200 feet of the observatory would render our
25 telescopes unusable. The Thomas Conway Observatory alone

1 represents 20 years of work by numerous volunteer
2 organizations. The observatory building was built by the
3 United Steelworkers at Burns Harbor and donated to the
4 Calumet Astronomical Society at an estimated cost of
5 \$60,000.

6 The telescope and pier were donated by the Friends of
7 the Dunes at a cost of \$17,000. The foundation of the
8 building, sidewalks, observing patio, gravel roads, and
9 parking lot were finished with work donated from several
10 local contractors, along with members of the CAS at an
11 estimated cost in the tens of thousands of dollars.

12 The Calumet Astronomical Society has 80 members that
13 can use this facility at all hours of the day or night
14 whenever the skies are conducive to observing or
15 astrophotography. In return for this access to the
16 facility, CAS has entered into a contract with the Lake
17 County Parks to host public observing sessions at the
18 Calumet Astronomy Center every month. Hundreds of
19 visitors regularly attend these free family-friendly
20 events. The Calumet Astronomical Society also provides
21 educational programs to schools, local scouting groups,
22 and other organizations that wish to take advantage of
23 this extraordinary educational facility.

24 To wrap it up, in order for the Calumet Astronomical
25 Center to continue providing these excellent programs to

1 the citizens of Northwest Indiana and the Greater
2 Chicagoland region, and educational programs for area
3 school children is critical that the Great Lakes Basin
4 Transportation Board reconsider their intention to have
5 these train tracks in such close proximity to the Calumet
6 Astronomical Society. And, again, this is on behalf of
7 the Calumet Astronomical Society. Thank you.

8 MS. HOWE: I am Debra Howe, D-e-b-r-a, H-o-w-e,
9 Superintendent of Tri-Creek School Corporation. I come to
10 you today to indicate that the Tri-Creek school trustees
11 will be voting on a resolution Thursday night in
12 opposition of this rail.

13 I'm asking you to specifically address the proximity
14 of the Great Lakes Basin Transportation rails to Lowell
15 Middle School. As we understand the map, the rail line
16 will butt up close to the western border of the middle
17 school and run along the portions of the southern border
18 before heading south across Belshaw. It also runs within
19 three-quarters of a mile to Lake Prairie Elementary School
20 and to Oak Hill Elementary School.

21 Our concerns regarding the proximity to our schools
22 include noise and vibration, air quality, student safety,
23 to transportation and economics.

24 Let me start with student safety. There's increased
25 possibility of spills and derailments with high-speed

1 rail. The proximity of the rails to the school makes this
2 problematic as 800 souls will be immediately affected.
3 The rails will be carrying hazardous materials that could
4 jeopardize a generation -- I'm used to speaking fast.

5 Okay. The trains will be carrying hazardous
6 materials that could jeopardize a generation of children
7 in our community. Train tracks are often found attractive
8 to youngsters. We are all familiar with several students'
9 deaths in neighboring communities when students walk the
10 tracks to their homes.

11 These are also currently proposed to be close to our
12 school and travel near by a subdivision where students
13 might find it inviting. The tracks run along the borders
14 for students running cross country and play football. The
15 noise will be loud enough to prevent students and
16 spectators from carrying out their play.

17 Additionally the proximity of the tracks will result
18 in a portion of the current property being potentially off
19 limits due to safety as we would not want students that
20 close to the tracks when playing.

21 The proposed tracks would cut across country roads.
22 Some students currently ride the bus for an hour.
23 Increasing student time on the bus would negatively impact
24 their quality of life. For every minute that a bus must
25 wait for a train to go through, it will cost us 50 cents.

1 We have a proposed solar field in the western
2 boundaries of the middle school property. Trains so close
3 to that area will be problematic if they kick up stones or
4 other items to a solar array. This would have a financial
5 impact for us as panels are used to offset energy costs.
6 In addition, we're teaching our students about energy
7 efficiency and alternative fuels to reduce our carbon
8 footprint. This impacts the learning process as this
9 proposed rail negates our efforts.

10 A rail crossing close to Belshaw will be close to our
11 well-fields. Additionally, there are only two east/west
12 roads that run through our community, Route 2 and Belshaw.
13 Cutting off Belshaw with a train and having people to wait
14 really is problematic, especially in emergency situations.
15 Potential of 110 trains going through per day, even if
16 designated a quiet zone, is a considerable amount of noise
17 and vibration.

18 The middle school has close to 800 students. They'll
19 be impacted daily. The land is flat and there's a lot of
20 wind which carries sound quite a distance which will cause
21 disruption in the learning environment, particularly for
22 special needs students. Middle school students also find
23 it difficult as we know to focus, and think about it when
24 there's contact disruption. Autistic children will have
25 difficulty and find it very anxiety provoking. We

1 encourage you to find alternate routes, but altogether
2 stop the project.

3 MS. BLANDFORD: My name is Mary Blandford,
4 B-l-a-n-d-f-o-r-d. I wanted to voice my objections to the
5 proposed railroad. I live about two miles north of where
6 it will cross on 185th. My mom will be south of that.
7 We'll be dissected. This railroad, it will decrease
8 Chicago's congestion, but it's going to increase our
9 congestion. And I don't see a financial benefit to
10 Indiana, just like the highway that they wanted to push
11 through.

12 And my husband works in Chicago, but we live in south
13 Lake County. We did this for quality of life. If we
14 wanted to live in that environment, we would have just
15 been in Chicago. We have heard that GLBT has asked for
16 exemptions from regulations to make this process faster.
17 That doesn't sound very safe to me. And with up to five
18 rails, how are the school buses going to navigate through
19 them with a constant train holding them up? There's going
20 to be delays, which is going to affect their classes.

21 But more importantly than that is the safety. If we
22 had three, four, five rail lines, if a farm implement or
23 if a bus or train would cross tracks, I could just imagine
24 how long does it take for that bus to cross the tracks?
25 What if they got stuck? Who would want to be the person

1 here that would say they would endorse that proposal?

2 My mother who lives south of this line, she has
3 migratory birds, including eagles that land there by her
4 pond. She has special grasses and plants that will
5 attract other wildlife there. And that railroad is maybe
6 about -- maybe a mile away from her property. And it's 20
7 acres of beautiful West Creek farmland.

8 And now it may be close enough for her to feel and
9 maybe not see, but in my experience growing up in Dalton,
10 Illinois, near a railroad, it's not pleasant. You don't
11 get a good night's sleep. And they've talked about these
12 trains could be every 13 minutes. So nobody would get a
13 good night's sleep. I would like to just ask you to say
14 no to the continuation of this project for those reasons
15 and thank you for taking our comments.

16 MS. PATTON: I am Lisa Patton, L-i-s-a,
17 P-a-t-t-o-n. I'm no relation to Frank Patton, just saying
18 that right now. I am the principal at Lake Prairie here
19 in Lowell and also a resident of this community since
20 about sixth grade. So I've been here a while. I feel
21 that I need to speak for the children in our community and
22 the impact that this is going to have on our school and
23 them.

24 I'm very concerned about this impact -- the impact
25 that this will have with the noise and the cause and the

1 interference that it will have to our daily learning. If
2 you've ever been in a classroom of 27 five-year-olds,
3 their engagement and attention is that of a gnat, and we
4 need them all the time with us and engaged; and obviously
5 the train noise would be a big issue with that.

6 I'm also concerned about the impact that this would
7 have on our bus routes and our children. Some of my kids
8 at Lake Prairie, they live down in the Schneider area.
9 And some of those kids might be on the bus for an hour.
10 You add all of the delays at the crossings, that's going
11 to increase their bus time and add to their already long
12 school days.

13 Rerouting or adding more buses to the fleet right now
14 is not an option. We all know that school funds are
15 getting cut every day, and it's hard enough that we're not
16 even able to find bus drivers for our current routes. So
17 adding more routes is not an option. I'm also concerned
18 about the potential for train accidents and hazardous
19 cargo.

20 I'm a certified school safety specialist, and I work
21 every day to keep our kids in a safe school. And this
22 railroad brings a much higher risk of accidents and a loss
23 of life. We have a very wonderful Lowell volunteer fire
24 department, but I have grave concerns about their capacity
25 and the equipment needed for train accidents and hazardous

1 cargo.

2 Overall my concerns surround the impact that this has
3 on our children. I'm charged with the responsibility to
4 keep them safe every day, to help them learn, prepare them
5 for the middle school, and for their future. This
6 railroad has many negative effects on them and would not
7 benefit them.

8 MR. MYERS: Dan Myers, M-y-e-r-s, Town of Lowell
9 water superintendent. The Town of Lowell's well-field is
10 located south of town. We have eight, soon to be nine
11 wells. They're anywhere from 24- to 35-feet deep. What
12 this is, I'm in charge of wellhead protection. Where
13 they're proposed to go through is just north of our fence
14 at the water treatment plant. That's well within the
15 one-year time of travel of a contaminant to be picked up
16 by the wells. We'll also feel the vibration outside the
17 building.

18 Basically this ring, if a contaminant is spilled, it
19 would take one year for our wells to pick up. If it gets
20 in our wells, we have to shut the wells down. We have no
21 other source of water. If we get contaminated in the
22 well-field, this entire area is out of water, not even to
23 mention that the people in unincorporated Lowell will be
24 affected also.

25 I'm definitely against it. I'm also going to hand a

1 copy of what actually a wellhead protection plan is to
2 each one of the members up here at the table. I recommend
3 you review it, give it to the people that are financing
4 this project.

5 Now, as far as train traffic congestion up north,
6 pardon my expression, the people up north chose to live in
7 an anthill. We did not. I chose to live here because
8 it's a nice, quiet, calm, safe community. I don't want to
9 see it turn like it is up north. Thank you.

10 MS. MUSSMAN: Patricia Mussman, M-u-s-s-m-a-n.
11 And I want to thank all of you for letting us speak
12 tonight. The issue I want to address tonight involves
13 both water and train safety. Farmers invest a lot of
14 money in tile for their fields so that they can produce
15 more product for people to eat, and that is a very costly
16 project. When you bring the rail through, you create a
17 dam. That dam goes through and breaks those tiles, and it
18 causes flooding on both sides of the rail.

19 The trains come through and they leak oil, water, and
20 fuel; and that gets into the groundwater. And our
21 watershed goes to the Kankakee River. The Kankakee River
22 in Illinois provides water for the communities there.
23 Momence and Kankakee draw their water out of the river.
24 If that water is contaminated, they lose their water
25 source.

1 The next thing I want to address is the integrity of
2 the railcars that these carriers will use to transport the
3 2,000 plus types of hazardous material that they're going
4 to carry at 70 miles an hour through this community.
5 There was a train derailment, a disaster in Quebec,
6 Canada, on July 6, 2013. It destroyed an entire community
7 and the surrounding area. And the equipment that they
8 were using, a lot of it was fairly new. It was as new as
9 having been manufactured in 2012.

10 Now, Mr. Patton does not own any rail cars. He
11 doesn't own any engines. He plans to lease these tracks
12 to other carriers, and who is going to regulate what
13 specifications these cars are going to have to meet? And
14 the other question is on insurance and how they will be
15 able to provide in case there are severe damages. The
16 rail company that was involved in this incident filed
17 bankruptcy, and there wasn't enough money to cover all the
18 damages.

19 So these are things that I think this board needs to
20 think about very seriously. There are other places that
21 are far better. Crete is doing a great job of cleaning
22 things up in north county and the south side of Chicago
23 and the west side of Chicago. I believe that this line
24 should stay up there. And, again, thank you.

25 MS. LINDEN: Sandy Linden with a Y and

1 L-i-n-d-e-n. I'd like to speak to the impact on one small
2 area of this project. I live on West 191st Avenue. It's
3 less than a half a mile south of the proposed rail line, a
4 quarter mile east of State Road 55, quarter mile west is
5 Grant Street. This rail line would traverse both roads.
6 There is no other road north to take besides these two.
7 It is our only direct way into town to the grocery store,
8 to the gas station, to doctor's appointments or to a
9 hospital.

10 It is the only direct way for an ambulance, fire
11 truck, or our utility company to get to us. There are ten
12 kids in this little area I'm talking about, from
13 kindergarten to high school whose only way to school is,
14 again, over these two railroad crossings. That's three
15 different buses, each crossing these railroad tracks four
16 times a day.

17 We had a tornado two years ago. It completely
18 blocked our road with downed trees. It downed a row of 13
19 utility poles on State Road 55. It collapsed large grain
20 bins, and there was a natural gas supply line leak. The
21 area was without power for five days. Emergency services,
22 NIPSCO, and any Lake County help came down State Road 55.
23 Again, it's our only direct way out or in.

24 Rural living already lends itself to longer emergency
25 response times on its own without the addition of added

1 railroad crossings. Also, I-65 closes frequently during
2 the winter snowstorms or because of major accidents.
3 These vehicles and big trucks are routinely diverted to
4 State Road 55, which would be traversed by this rail line.
5 This is just one small area. I'm talking about half a
6 mile. But this is the same for the majority of the people
7 out here.

8 Most of these rural areas have no other reasonable
9 alternate roads to get around this rail line. This
10 proposed railroad would box us in, severely limit our
11 access to any emergency services, endanger busloads of
12 kids every day several times a day, and destroy the quiet
13 peacefulness of the rural lifestyle we chose. Thank you.

14 PASTOR DEARDORFF: My name is Pastor Jeff
15 Deardorff, D-e-a-r-d-o-r-f-f, pastor of the Range Line
16 Community Presbyterian Church, which is just north of
17 Route 2 and Clay Street. The rail, proposed rail line
18 would come within a hundred to 200 feet of the church. We
19 are a community church, meaning that we have every month
20 dinners for 200, 250 people. We are a community church.
21 And we have AA, we have 40 AA people come and use our
22 church. And we have Eagle Creek Township social services
23 being set up within our church.

24 The noise would be pretty hard, and I got a big
25 voice, but not that big a voice. And so it would affect

1 our services. The new building that's eight years old was
2 over about \$1.1 million. We have well water that would be
3 affected if any contaminants were there. Safety of
4 children, we have a playground area; and that becomes a
5 major problem. So obviously the community that I
6 represent and the farmers and all of the people in that
7 area, which is near 65 but north of Route 2 and Clay
8 Street would be impacted very badly. Thank you.

9 MS. BASALA: Sandy, with a Y, Basala,
10 B-a-s-a-l-a. And I'm here to speak on behalf of the Lake
11 County Parks as a volunteer, and in particular a volunteer
12 at Buckley Homestead.

13 For those of you that don't know, the railroad is
14 slated to run adjacent to the back 80 acres of Buckley
15 Homestead and directly through the park at the grounds
16 where the Calumet Astronomy Center is located. Buckley
17 Homestead, the main house at Buckley Homestead is on the
18 National Register of Historic Places. The homestead
19 itself was founded in 1849 by immigrants from Ireland and
20 remained in direct family lineage until it was donated to
21 the public in 1977 with the express purpose of being used
22 as an educational facility.

23 The main house, the barn, which was built in 1916, it
24 will be a hundred years this year. The Buckley school,
25 while a replica, does sit on the original foundation area.

1 And the original was in use from the middle 1800s until
2 1920s. All of these buildings as well as the log cabin
3 and the woodland Indian settlement are used to educate
4 thousands of school children each year and adults and
5 families about Indiana history.

6 Also, Buckley is -- not only represents history, but
7 it's making history. Larry already talked about the CAS
8 and the Conway Observatory. I don't know if Professor
9 Rengstorf -- so he's here, so he'll talk about Purdue's
10 part and the educational purposes.

11 I'm here to tell you that when Buckley Homestead was
12 donated for educational purposes, it was entrusted to the
13 Lake County Parks to protect these precious resources for
14 the residents of and the visitors of Lake County. The
15 above facts that I stated should show you that it should
16 not be destroyed, but instead be supported and continued.
17 And I will tell you there is no way to mitigate 167 years
18 of history.

19 MS. HAYDEN: Susan Hayden, H-a-y-d-e-n. I would
20 like to comment on the land use issue. I would also like
21 to speak for the family farms that are here tonight. My
22 husband and I farm with our two sons, who both have sons
23 that love working on our farms and I assume will one day
24 farm with us; that is if there's any farm ground left in
25 south Lake County.

1 If this railroad is allowed to be built, just the 278
2 miles, 200-foot wide would take close to 7,000 acres of
3 prime farm ground out of production. That's not counting
4 what would be used for switching stations, etc. One
5 figure I read was more like 15,000 acres. This proposed
6 railroad would slide diagonally through many farms in
7 Indiana. One of our farms, as do many others have an
8 irrigation system on, a system that costs from \$70,000 to
9 \$100,000 and up, depending on how many acres they are
10 covering.

11 If you are not familiar with a center pivot, it is
12 placed in the center of the field and circles around the
13 whole field. This would not be possible if there was a
14 railroad track in the way. Farmers have spent thousands
15 of dollars on field tiles to drain their fields, sometimes
16 just a single line. But others have spent over \$100,000
17 to place laterals throughout the whole field. What will
18 happen if those are broken during the construction? Who's
19 responsible to fix them?

20 A railroad track sits up on a high grade basically
21 forming a dam across the county. We already have drainage
22 problems from the excess water that comes from our
23 neighbors to the north. Where will that water go? The
24 little amount that we would receive from eminent domain
25 would not begin to cover our losses.

1 The proposed map cuts diagonally across a lot of
2 fields. This would lead to irregular shaped fields. Most
3 farms today have 12 to 24, even 36 row corn planters.
4 They would not be able to plant those point fields that a
5 railroad would leave. According to the website, they
6 state, and I quote, "While the new railroad will occupy
7 land that currently is devoted to agriculture and other
8 uses, we intend to avoid settled areas and minimize the
9 railroad's impact on the way area residents live their
10 lives today."

11 It will greatly impact our lives. Tri-Creek is the
12 largest school corporation in area size in the state of
13 Indiana. My grand-kids are now getting on the bus at 6:40
14 a.m. for an 8:15 school start. They have had to get on
15 even earlier to accommodate the buses, have to cross
16 numerous tracks on their route to school. Their safety is
17 a real concern of ours.

18 The majority area of the proposed railroad is
19 agriculture. That's what it's meant to stay. It really
20 upset me to read this quote from Mr. Frank Patton, the man
21 behind this project. It was in one of the many articles
22 that I read. "The question is are you in this for a fast
23 buck, or are you in this to build a railroad for the 21st
24 Century?" He said, "Maybe I'm being grandiose, but I'm 70
25 years old and most of my life has passed. This is the

1 legacy for myself and my children."

2 I ask you what about our legacy? What about the
3 legacy that we have planned to leave for our children?
4 What about all those landowners here that have had their
5 farm and family for generations? Indiana recognizes
6 landowners that have had their farm and family for
7 generations for over a hundred years. And I know many of
8 them are here tonight.

9 So I'd just like to ask all of the family farmers in
10 the audience, landowners please stand. I know you're all
11 opposed to this. I'd just like you to consider all of
12 this. Remember, no farms, no food.

13 MS. ANGERMAN: LeAnn Angerman, L-e-A-n-n
14 A-n-g-e-r-m-a-n. I'm a member of the Lowell Town Council,
15 and I would like to speak on our opposition to the
16 proposed rail line in expressing concerns with the line.
17 The impact a rail line will have on the Town of Lowell is
18 great and needs to be considered. Our concerns include
19 the proximity of the rail lines to the Town of Lowell
20 water supply well-fields. Any substances which could be
21 transported by the rail line pose a potential threat to
22 our water supply in the event of a derailment or accident
23 and are a great concern to us.

24 You also heard Dan Myers speak on the subject a
25 little bit earlier for our well-fields. In the event of

1 disaster or derailment, especially if hazardous materials
2 were involved, the increased training, manpower and
3 equipment necessary to properly respond to the situation
4 are beyond the budgetary constraints of the town and most
5 likely that of the townships as well.

6 The frequency of the trains will have a significant
7 impact on the flow of traffic through town, especially in
8 the event of an emergency situation. The proximity to the
9 Lowell Middle School is of great concern in regards to the
10 safety and wellbeing of the children as Dr. Debra Howe
11 testified to just a little bit ago.

12 We are requesting that you consider our concerns and
13 include the Town of Lowell in all conversations regarding
14 the final decision on this matter. The Lowell local
15 community must be involved in every step of the process.
16 Thank you.

17 MR. SALATAS: Chris Salatas, S-a-l-a-t-a-s,
18 President of the Lowell Town Council. Although this
19 meeting was scheduled to be at the Lowell Town Council, I
20 had not been notified about this until the general public
21 was as well. So I'd like to be included in any further
22 conversation.

23 I agree wholeheartedly with our water superintendent,
24 Dan Myers. This poses a serious threat to our
25 well-fields. And to say that an accident with hazardous

1 materials from a train derailment would be ignorant of
2 history. I think we all can Google the Monon Trail
3 derailment, which left diesel fuel underneath our historic
4 downtown. So to say it won't happen in my backyard, it
5 has happened.

6 Furthermore, I agree with Debra Howe entirely and the
7 principals of the schools. This poses a serious threat to
8 our schools, our children's education and their safety.
9 The community to our north has had several children
10 unfortunately parish on train rails.

11 Furthermore, Senator Niemeyer and Commissioner Gerry
12 Scheub has hit on the fact that it's going to impact
13 negatively drainage. Lowell has spent hundreds of
14 thousands of dollars in drainage, specifically on the
15 Powell Ditch. All of that is going to be in vain now if
16 it's intersected by a heavy freight rail, as well as we've
17 spent hundreds of thousands, if not millions of dollars on
18 our wells throughout the years, which are going to be,
19 again, negatively impacted. That's all taxpayers dollars
20 that's going to be thrown in the garbage because of this
21 train.

22 Furthermore, and lastly, again, Rick Niemeyer hit on
23 this as well. Economic development is going to be
24 negatively impacted. We in the town have strived hard to
25 drive positive economic development into our town. And

1 this train could unravel all of the hard work that we've
2 tried to accomplish.

3 I personally am very opposed to this train as I see
4 no economic development coming out of it. Thank you very
5 much, and I hope you take this all into consideration.

6 MR. BASALA: Jim Basala, B-a-s-a-l-a. I'm the
7 Chief Executive Officer of the Lake County Parks and
8 Recreation Department. Allow me to speak specifically
9 about the homestead. You heard Larry talk about the
10 astronomical center. You heard Sandy talk passionately
11 about the origins of Buckley Homestead. You have a letter
12 from myself in opposition to this project. Allow me to
13 read one of the paragraphs.

14 "Buckley Homestead is a unique county park that
15 combines educational, historical, and scientific research
16 components, along with the preservation of hundreds of
17 acres of open space in an increasingly developing county
18 for the betterment of all Lake County citizens. These
19 combined qualities create a distinctive experience that
20 increases the quality of life and brings in tourism
21 dollars that would be negated by a major railroad
22 development disrupting the park and the surrounding
23 countryside."

24 Buckley is a very unique park in our system. Not
25 only does it preserve open space, but it also preserves

1 those historical components that Sandy talked about. It
2 educates kids that potatoes don't come out of a box. And
3 in this increasingly urban area, we need to preserve that
4 agriculture way of life and teach that agricultural
5 history of our county.

6 We have invested hundreds and hundreds of thousands
7 of dollars of private donations, state grants, federal
8 grants, local taxpayer dollars, and hundreds if not
9 thousands of hours of volunteer hours in developing,
10 maintaining, and preserving this park site. I can't speak
11 any more eloquently than what Larry did, Sandy did. And I
12 know Adam will talk for Purdue University.

13 It's a great facility that combines all those groups
14 that make the community better, and this railroad will
15 definitely impact and negate all that hard work. You have
16 my letter in opposition and the Lake County Parks and
17 Recreation board will be adopting a resolution in
18 opposition this Thursday after a park board meeting. And
19 I'll pass it on.

20 MR. HOFFMAN: My name is Martin Hoffman,
21 H-o-f-f-m-a-n. I came to this community 65 years ago. I
22 live by 65 and 2. My family's raised there. According to
23 the schedule of the railroad, it's going to come over the
24 interstate about a mile south of the intersection. When
25 it enters over the interstate there, it will come over two

1 30-inch natural gas lines. That's no problem to run these
2 trains over these natural gas lines. They will follow the
3 gas lines until it gets to the stone quarry.

4 Are you familiar with the stone quarry? How did it
5 happen to get that way? How did it happen to get by that
6 stone quarry? You notice Mr. Patton and the man that owns
7 the stone quarry live in the same town? And so these are
8 some of the things that we are faced with.

9 Now, if you noticed on your little map, this
10 highway -- or train track will run right parallel with the
11 Kankakee River until it gets to the stone quarry. Then it
12 will turn directly northeast. When it goes northeast, it
13 will cut diagonally across the farmland. When it cuts
14 diagonally across the farmland, it increases the different
15 property owners that become involved.

16 And when you cross that way, it's running about a
17 45-degree angle. Where it crosses 2, the work plan is
18 right next to my son's lawn. It will be on a 45-degree
19 angle. And State Road 2 east of I-65 is one of the
20 busiest highways in the state of Indiana. And this will
21 run on an angle. And you can't see very good on a
22 45-degree angle.

23 It will also run northwest. And it goes up through
24 hilly land. I thought that it should be kind of level
25 land where you put the railroad on. But this is going to

1 start into where it used to be dairy farms and how this is
2 going to impact these areas. So there's going to be much
3 more. There's been a lot said here tonight that I don't
4 need to -- but I just wanted to tell you that we're really
5 opposed to it. This is devastating for us. Thank you.

6 MR. ROBERTSON: James Robertson,
7 R-o-b-e-r-t-s-o-n. I'm from Dyer, Indiana, to begin with.
8 So this proposal does not affect my home life. But I'm a
9 member of the Calumet Astronomical Society. And just like
10 Larry Maka said earlier, this will mess everything up as
11 far as our observatory and being able to show the public
12 the stars in the sky that we enjoy. And it will not make
13 it any better.

14 So I'm definitely opposed to this a hundred percent,
15 and I hope that it doesn't go in because it's not going to
16 help you folks down here. Like they say, the possible
17 contamination of drinking water if there's an accident,
18 that's one of my biggest concerns for you folks down here.
19 And like I say, I'm against it a hundred percent. And I
20 hope like heck it don't get done. Thank you.

21 MS. STRAUGHEN: Hi, my name is Dawn Straughen,
22 S-t-r-a-u-g-h-e-n. I've been living in West Creek for
23 about 26 years, and we are on a well and all our neighbors
24 are on wells as you heard numerous times. I'm concerned
25 about the impact of our well because each individual house

1 and farm have their own wells in the townships. We're not
2 connected to the town wells.

3 So each individual well would be affected and the
4 town wells would be affected. So, you know, it's a lot of
5 water that we would be without. And there's no guarantee
6 of who's going to replace it. My grandchildren are
7 growing up in town too, so I'm concerned about the schools
8 and the impact it has on the schools.

9 And we are a community. So what impacts one area of
10 Lowell will impact the other area. Like with Buckley
11 Homestead, our church, Range Line Presbyterian Church that
12 Reverend Deardorff was up to speak about, we belong to
13 that. We travel, and we have to cross Route 2 every time
14 we go. And we have so many different things going on at
15 church. So we're on Route 2 just about two or three times
16 a week going to choir practice or, you know, different
17 activities, dinners and stuff that we have.

18 And Buckley Homestead, our church has a booth every
19 year at Buckley Homestead. So we have Buckley Homestead
20 days where we make all our products and stuff like that.
21 And with the trains going through, you can't hear, you
22 know, yourself speak. It's going to be just crazy. So
23 I'm totally against it. It just would impact our
24 lifestyle and our water and the schools, and it just
25 shouldn't be here. Thank you.

1 MR. HILDEBRANDT: My name is Elden Hildebrandt.
2 I live at 6655 East 173rd Avenue. I have a Hebron mailing
3 address, but I live in Eagle Creek Township. My concerns
4 focus on an area around I-65 and State Road 2, the
5 intersection. Marty Hoffman kind of touched on some of
6 these. I have some other specific issues.

7 The proposed path crosses State Road 2 just east of
8 I-65. From there it goes northeast and crosses Clay
9 Street, then continues on to cross 173rd Avenue. That
10 makes three rail crossings in one mile. For emergency
11 services to reach the homes on 173rd from Lowell, they
12 would have to negotiate those three rail crossings and
13 very possibly cause long delays creating a very serious
14 safety issue.

15 Then from State Road 2, kind of going south, the
16 tracks go south-southwest to within a few hundred yards of
17 a new stone quarry that Mr. Hoffman spoke of. The quarry
18 is on the outside of the curve. This track is curving to
19 go on to the southwest. And in my life experience,
20 anything that has wheels eventually is going to tip over
21 and have a wreck. So that's going to put that train on
22 the outside of that track near the quarry just a few
23 hundred yards.

24 And it's estimated when they get up to full
25 production, they'll be pumping up to 17 million gallons of

1 water a day out of that quarry into the Singleton Ditch,
2 which eventually goes into the Kankakee River and on into
3 Illinois. So if any hazardous spills get in there and
4 work through that, I see that as a big problem.

5 And some more about the proposed route. It doesn't
6 look like any train route I've ever seen. I'm not an
7 engineer, but this thing goes all over. There seems to be
8 curves and everything. All of them shown on the map are
9 more of a straight line.

10 So, again, as I mentioned earlier, that curve right
11 near the quarry in my mind is a big safety issue. And
12 then it continues on past there, goes over I-65, and for
13 some reason they have it going right through a little
14 lake. I don't know. It seems like a mistake to me on
15 their map, but I don't know. Maybe it's not a mistake.
16 Either way, it certainly makes me stop and think about the
17 rest of the project and what other mistakes may have been
18 made in their plans.

19 Perhaps another mistake is the documentation they
20 submitted. They talk about 110 trains a day to you folks.
21 But when they're questioned by the media and the citizens,
22 they talk about 20 trains a day. So I don't know. These
23 are just a couple of points that make me take pause and
24 wonder how well it's been thought through. But I'm
25 confident that you as a board in the process of carrying

1 out your duties will find many other problems with this
2 project and come to realize it would be a noose around the
3 southern Porter and Lake counties. Thank you.

4 MR. HILDEBRANDT: Good evening. My name is Erik
5 Hildebrandt, E-r-i-k, H-i-l-d-e-b-r-a-n-d-t. I oppose the
6 proposed rail way we are commenting on as the negatives
7 greatly out way the positives for both my personal and
8 family interests and for the interests of my community,
9 county and state.

10 There are many and various reasons I oppose this
11 railway that I offer for you tonight. The first two
12 being -- are concerns over water contamination and
13 emergency response time. We should beat this drum long
14 and hard during this fight.

15 First, a private company named Great Lakes Basin
16 Transportation suggests that this railway will be built
17 within the drainage basin of the Great Lakes. However,
18 this is not the case for most, if not all of the proposed
19 route within Indiana. Because of the area and vicinity
20 this railway is proposed to be built in does not drain to
21 Lake Michigan, we will not be able to obtain fresh water
22 from the Great Lakes when a derailment occurs and the
23 aquifer is contaminated with the chemicals that are bound
24 to be traveling on this proposed railway.

25 The lack of a backup water supply has been proven in

1 the past when residents of south Lake County fought
2 against a proposed landfill in Eagle Creek. I will be
3 highly interested to see what the mitigation is for this
4 concern.

5 Second, the proposed routing for this railway will
6 only increase the response times of the paramedics that
7 serve Eagle Creek Township. These paramedics are already
8 over nine miles away from many parts of our township.
9 Emergency services will take even longer to reach our
10 rural areas. The time it takes to get from a medical
11 emergency site to any of the closest hospitals will also
12 increase as the number of crossings may increase.

13 Third, the proposed routing of this railway will also
14 require extensive and expensive reworking of the electric
15 and gas utilities that cross the proposed railway.
16 Increasing the number of utility railway crossings will
17 make the utility distribution and transmission system more
18 expensive to install, operate and maintain, resulting in
19 increased monthly utility bills for all the rate payers
20 within the affected utility franchised areas.

21 Lastly, if I may, I would like to submit a Lake
22 County planning commission zone map printed off of the
23 Lake County, Indiana, government website this morning,
24 which shows that 100 percent of the proposed route through
25 Lake County passes through areas that are targeted for

1 development in agriculture, parks and recreation, or
2 conservation use. Urban sprawl is a definite concern for
3 this area of our county and state, which our county has
4 rightly identified by pointing out certain areas where
5 residential, commercial and industrial development should
6 be closely managed.

7 I'd like to thank you for your time tonight for
8 coming and listening to our concerns and say I oppose this
9 railway.

10 MR. HATHAWAY: Hi, my name is William Hathaway,
11 H-a-t-h-a-w-a-y. I'd like to thank everybody who's
12 already spoken. You've done so very eloquently. I would
13 like to remind the board that access to Lake Michigan's
14 water is not just financially difficult for us, we're
15 forbidden by international treaty to access it.

16 I'd like to specifically talk about the EIS and the
17 process for it. The scope of the project is very poorly
18 defined. While the route is described in much detail, a
19 lot is not. And I use the term deceptively vague, the use
20 of 200 feet of right-of-way, the vague comments about
21 utility corridors, huge areas that would suggest an
22 intermodal facility and not just the switching yard.

23 If the ultimate plan of this railroad is for an
24 intermodal yard, pipelines in the utility corridor and
25 other uses that have not been discussed yet, these must be

1 made known for a valid EIS to be developed. And the EIS
2 must limit any potential approval to what is scoped in the
3 EIS.

4 Additionally vague is the purpose, needs and merits.
5 Right now they're just statements that someone has made.
6 There's no backing, studies, no documentation. We must be
7 able to verify the statements, the comments, the claims of
8 benefits that are being made by the railroad. And so far
9 that is not possible.

10 An alternative in the EIS must be more than just
11 alternate routes. They must include possible
12 implementation in technology with existing facilities,
13 examples of IT improvements, better coordination with
14 existing railroads, etc. If this isn't done, it would
15 seem that the requirement isn't met to adequately look at
16 the alternatives.

17 If the preferred alternatives are only selected from
18 other routes, then it would seem the de facto decision to
19 build a new railroad has already been made. And finally,
20 while I realize that this hearing is only about the
21 development of the environmental study, I would
22 respectfully ask that the board members here go back to
23 the whole board and request that public hearings on the
24 merit review be made, not just for a few members
25 discussing the possible merits, but ask the people who are

1 discussing the merits and looking at the merits to come
2 out and talk to us. Thank you.

3 MR. GRUSZKA: Good evening, everyone, Michael
4 Gruszka, G-r-u-s-z-k-a, Lowell Town Councilman Ward 1.
5 I'd like to second what Council President Chris Salatas
6 said and Councilwoman Vice President LeAnn Angerman. I'm
7 here also with 22 years experience as a first responder.
8 I spent 22 years in law enforcement in the City of East
9 Chicago. I know what railroads can do to a community.

10 For 18 years they had no overpass over any of the
11 train traffic, and it was devastating to that city. If
12 you had a shooting, someone had a heart attack, everybody
13 was locked down because those engineers get timed out as
14 we all know it. If you don't know it, I'm telling you,
15 they get timed out. And when they get timed out, they're
16 stopping that train exactly where it's at and it sits
17 whether they're blocking the crossing or not. They're not
18 to move that train until a new crew comes in, and then it
19 moves.

20 So it could be five minutes. It could be ten
21 minutes. I've seen them sit for over 45 minutes. To tell
22 me that that's not going to impact the community of Lowell
23 is absurd. Those tracks that are proposed are set to be
24 able to handle 110 trains a day. That's one every 13
25 minutes. If I do the math, and I'm not a math genius,

1 good luck getting in and out of Lowell.

2 And furthermore, after my 22 years within law
3 enforcement with East Chicago, I currently work for a
4 railroad law enforcement agency now. It is not in the
5 interest of the Town of Lowell or any community for these
6 railroad trains to be put in. It serves no purpose.
7 They've got plenty of room up north to run those trains.
8 Thank you very much.

9 MS. COSGROVE: Good evening, Linda Cosgrove,
10 C-o-s-g-r-o-v-e. I would like to address the historic
11 portion of the EIS. Surveyor Emerson touched on it
12 briefly as far as it being a flood plain. This whole area
13 that's in Lake County that the rail is proposed to run
14 through was previously a 600,000-acre marsh known as the
15 Kankakee Marsh. There are a series of complex drain tiles
16 throughout for the farmers to use.

17 In that previous marsh, there are many sand hills,
18 many rises; and historically Native Americans used this
19 site exclusively. I've been fortunate enough to survey
20 with the State of Indiana and also Purdue. And we have
21 found a discoidal, which he told me was absolutely an
22 unusual find. And I said, "Well, how unusual was it?" He
23 said, "Let's put it this way: I've only seen 12 of them
24 in the state of Indiana, including the state museum."

25 Purdue -- this is a piece of obsidian. This is only

1 made from the volcanoes in the Northwest. Purdue told me
2 that I may have very well found the route from the
3 northeast part of the country to Ohio in which they've
4 been looking.

5 I have a French trading bead. The area was high in
6 trading in the 1600s. I have Indian beads made out of
7 shells. The entirety of the Kankakee Marsh is rich with
8 this kind of artifact. And many of the farmers are aware
9 of it, and I would suggest that you definitely comment on
10 the e-mail with regard to those.

11 One more thing, I'd like you to know that the static
12 water levels in Eagle Creek Township are as shallow as six
13 feet. The soils in a lot of the area are muck, and I
14 don't see how a train or rails could be supported in that
15 type of soil or that type of static water level. Thank
16 you.

17 MS. JONES: My name is Rachael Jones, J-o-n-e-s,
18 traditional spelling. I'm an up-north person. We are
19 impacted by the route three-quarters of a mile from us,
20 and we are at 16146 East County Line Road. We're just
21 west of the state line, the Illinois side. But we missed
22 that meeting, so we're here.

23 And we represent a farm. We're a local board farm.
24 We work with dozens of small farms, small sustainable
25 farms along the proposed route all the way through

1 Manteno. What a local board farm does is we bring
2 organic, local sustainable food to our farm and we host
3 it. People from Chicago and all around come to our farm,
4 and they are able to experience rural living, as well as
5 we provide an outlet for all of these farmers to supply
6 their food and provide supply to the Chicagoland area.

7 Along that route, the proposed route, many of those
8 farmlands are cut in half. For many of them, again, it's
9 issues of drainage for their fields, for their crops.
10 There's the issue with water like what's been stated. And
11 also we have issues with soil sustainability because we
12 know the chemical impact and environmental impact on soil
13 from past soil surveys that have been done from railroads
14 that have been converted to trails.

15 We represent that small farming community, again,
16 that is impacted by this project. And I just urge you to
17 look at the number of actual farms that are impacted along
18 the route all the way through. And, you know, when we're
19 talking about a time and an age when we are heavy on the
20 demand for good, local, sustainable food, and we're eating
21 up some of the nation's richest soil for a project such as
22 this, I would urge you to really review the different
23 people involved along the route, that they are actually
24 farmers.

25 The woman back there with the red sweatshirt said it

1 absolutely the best, and I tried to take notes off that;
2 but it's real scrambly, and I can't read it anymore. But
3 I just represent a real farm and I represent dozens of
4 other farms that we work with all along the route that now
5 our fields are cut in half, and we're no longer able to
6 supply the demand for the Chicagoland area in our fields.

7 DR. RENGSTORF: Hi, Adam Rengstorf, A-d-a-m,
8 R-e-n-g-s-t-o-r-f. I'm at Purdue University Northwest,
9 and I'm here to express my institution's concerns and my
10 own personal objections to the proposed rail line. A lot
11 of what I was going to say you actually already heard from
12 my colleagues at the Calumet Astronomical Society, Lake
13 County Parks Department.

14 The Calumet Astronomy Center out there on Chase
15 Street, in addition to the excellent Conway Observatory,
16 it's also home to a Purdue research facility, the NIRO
17 telescope. NIRO is Northwest Indiana Robotic Telescope.
18 Scientists love acronyms.

19 But the NIRO telescope is a National Science
20 Foundation funded research grade telescope that we use at
21 Purdue to help teach our astronomy labs and our
22 upper-level physics courses, but also train our physics
23 majors, upper-level physics majors on how to do research
24 and prepare them for grad work or lab work or what have
25 you.

1 So, look, you already heard from the CAS members
2 about the ground vibrations. The rail lines pass within
3 less than 250 feet away from my building, which is very
4 excellently vibrationally isolated. The telescope is
5 isolated from the building, but not the ground. There's
6 this huge concrete pier that goes in the ground. I have
7 all sorts of calculations and computations that I won't
8 bore you with, but I'll put in the electronic submission.

9 It's just so close, and the ground vibrations are
10 going to be so strong that it will effectively render our
11 building useless for the research goals that we have, the
12 research that I do, and that my undergrad physics majors
13 help me out with. Yeah. That's all I want to say. Thank
14 you. I concede the rest of my time.

15 MR. SUSON: Good evening. My name is Daniel
16 Suson, S-u-s-o-n. I'm here from Purdue University
17 Northwest as well. I work with Dr. Rengstorf. He talked
18 a bit about the technical issues related to putting this
19 rail line so close to our observatory. I want to talk
20 about the impact on our students. Our department offers
21 multiple astronomy sections, and we routinely over the
22 course of an academic year have a hundred or more students
23 that are going through our astronomy classes.

24 We also have numerous physics students that are
25 working on projects that get them published as

1 undergraduates in journals in asteroid finding.

2 Dr. Rengstorf didn't have time to mention one of the
3 main projects he does with this observatory is monitoring
4 asteroids that will pass near the earth to make sure that
5 we know their orbits to avoid possible collisions. This
6 rail line will make the use of that observatory completely
7 unnegated.

8 From a financial point of view, we have over a
9 quarter of a million dollars invested in this facility.
10 To move it would cost us the same or more. And when I
11 looked at the map of what this was proposed, this is going
12 to have an even worse impact on us because at Purdue
13 Northwest, we are merging with the campus located in
14 Westville. This rail line runs just south of Westville as
15 well.

16 So we aren't going to be able to move the observatory
17 really anywhere else within the region without it being
18 impacted by this rail line. This is going to have an
19 enormous negative impact on the students that we are
20 currently servicing as well as the students that we are
21 able to recruit.

22 The university's mission is to provide education to
23 the residents of Northwest Indiana in order to further
24 provide them the training for advanced careers and to help
25 with the economic impact throughout the whole region. So

1 this rail line is not only going to damage the economic
2 and natural beauty of the Lowell area, it's going to
3 damage the whole Northwest Indiana region because it's
4 going to impact our ability to provide a quality education
5 to the students and the residents of this area.

6 I urge you to turn down the project and I want to
7 thank you for your time.

8 MS. DUMBSKY: My name is Michelle Dumbsky,
9 D-u-m-b-s-k-y. I am a member of the Tri-Creek School
10 Corp. But I'm here also to speak as a community member.
11 I see all these people, and I'm so excited that you guys
12 came out tonight because I have to say I personally am
13 tired of fighting. In Lowell, we have fought the quarry,
14 Illiana, the landfill, the dump. It just seems like
15 somebody's got it out for us. I would just like to say
16 thank you, guys, for standing up for it again.

17 As a school corporation, we have one of the biggest
18 land masses in Indiana. We are in the bottom 30 for
19 funding. We already have kids, like you've heard several
20 times, on the buses for an hour. We're talking about
21 adding even more time to these children's rides. We're
22 talking about increased safety issues with buses. We're
23 talking about things that will have a direct impact on our
24 children. We're talking about putting these bus routes
25 right along next to our schools.

1 We have a school that we built not too long ago, and
2 we put it out kind of thinking that could be a great
3 growth opportunity and economic development for houses
4 close to a school. We're fighting every time we turn
5 around, either it's a toll road or now it's a railway.
6 All I'm saying is there has to be a thought process in
7 this.

8 This town has been very responsible in the way that
9 we have tried to grow. We hold things like our small town
10 aspects and how we like to live our life very cherished
11 here, close to our hearts. I know that might sound kind
12 of mushy, but that's why we all moved here or stayed here.
13 So I know that's not on the environmental aspect of it,
14 but it's a big piece for us.

15 And we're talking about impacting our farmland here,
16 cutting our properties directly in half. That's what
17 Lowell is. That's what it was built on. And I would just
18 like to say that I personally am against this railway.
19 I'm tired of fighting. Please put an end to this and
20 don't bring us another thing, please.

21 MS. HATHAWAY VICARI: My name is Gina, G-i-n-a,
22 Hathaway, H-a-t-h-a-w-a-y, Vicari, V-i-c-a-r-i. I have
23 lived in Lowell my entire life. It's wonderful, and I
24 chose to raise my children here partially because of the
25 environment that we have. We can go right down the street

1 and go to Buckley Homestead and share that history. We
2 can go into town and go to all of our parks.

3 However, we live in unincorporated Lowell right on
4 the other side of Belshaw where this will cut us off. The
5 other thing that no one's spoken about yet is where the
6 rail line goes over 41 is right between State Road 2 on
7 either side. State Road 2 goes into Illinois and turns
8 into 17, and then it goes through Lowell. When we have
9 snowstorms or any other kind of accident that stops
10 traffic on 65 or 41, we're the next route to go to either
11 of those other optional routes. And all that truck
12 traffic through the town or on Belshaw is very damaging to
13 the way we have the town set up with all the foot traffic
14 that we are trying to bring into town. So thanks.

15 MR. DVORSEAK: Hello, my name is Mark Dvorseak,
16 D-v-o-r-s-e-a-k. Andy handed the board a map that I
17 wanted to go over. I live approximately six miles east of
18 town and one mile north. For many of you that have been
19 around, the old Center School property, that's where we
20 live. What I wanted to bring up is one area -- I found
21 many problems with this whole plan, but one area that I
22 wanted to address is emergency services, specifically in
23 the Eagle Creek Township area.

24 When the second truck stop was built, as you see on
25 the map, the road could not handle all of the traffic.

1 And in 2004, the state went ahead and widened that road.
2 And during the summer is when construction -- (inaudible).
3 In June of that year, my eight-year-old nephew and his
4 sister came over to visit the cousins; and we're all
5 swimming. Well, the story for you, my nephew, Matthew,
6 put on his mask, went to the bottom of the pool and didn't
7 come up.

8 My wife was a certified nurse practitioner, jumped in
9 the pool, pulled him out, gave him a little mouth to
10 mouth, he spat it out and was fine; and he wanted to
11 jump right in the pool. While this was going on, another
12 family member called emergency services to have paramedics
13 come out. So Lowell dispatched immediately, got stuck in
14 the traffic by the truck stops. And by the time they got
15 to the house, it was 20 minutes later. So they asked
16 Matthew to come out of the pool. They checked him out,
17 and he was fine.

18 The reason I bring up the story is this: The
19 ambulance took over 20 minutes because of the traffic. If
20 you look at that map, there are three at-grade crossings
21 at Route 2, one at Route 2, one at Clay Street, and the
22 little circled area is where my house is. There is no
23 alternative route for emergency services to get out in our
24 direction. They have to go four miles north to go over
25 153rd or way south.

1 The proposed rail bed is going to be a problem for
2 emergency services, for Eagle Creek. In essence, everyone
3 will be cut off of emergency services. I only analyzed a
4 small five-mile section of track. But from what I've
5 heard tonight, we need to analyze this entire rail line.

6 Closing comment. The STB docket FD 35952 pertaining
7 to the project states that the board must approve a
8 construction request unless it finds that the construction
9 is "inconsistent with the public convenience and
10 necessity." I state for the record that denying the
11 right, not the privilege, but the right of emergency
12 services to the residents of Eagle Creek demonstrate that
13 this project is definitely inconsistent with the public
14 convenience and necessity. I request that you consider my
15 comment here and my future comments, which I'll put
16 online, and deny the construction of this project. And I
17 thank the board for this opportunity to speak. Thank you.

18 MR. SCHULTZ: Good evening. My name is Bob
19 Schultz. I'm taking a different approach from what I've
20 heard tonight. S-c-h-u-l-t-z. The people -- you watch TV
21 and you hear a man on TV tell us how stupid the
22 politicians in Washington are. I'm going to say how
23 stupid the people trying to build this railroad are. They
24 don't know that the railroad that's running north through
25 from Schneider up to Highland and Gary already connects

1 with the railroads going out east. It also goes west as
2 far as Streator to connect with the Santa Fe and --
3 Burlington North Santa Fe in Streator. There are a total
4 of four trains a day, two going north and two going south
5 on this Transcontinental line.

6 Now, the people trying to build this railroad and
7 telling us that there are going to be a hundred a day fall
8 into this stupid category. I hope you understand what I'm
9 saying and that if they wanted to do something, this line
10 from Streator continues over to Kersey and it
11 discontinues. It used to go all the way through Knox up
12 through Logansport where they want to -- up through
13 LaPorte where they want to go and to Elkhart. If they
14 wanted to build a railroad through here, they can buy the
15 steel from the Norfolk Southern for not too much money and
16 build the railroad across the other way.

17 The bridge is still across the Kankakee River, and
18 the environmental people don't have to do a lot of
19 checking. And they're wasting our -- the environmental
20 services people are wasting our taxpayer's money trying to
21 promote something that won't work. Thank you.

22 MR. WOLFE: Mark Wolfe, W-o-l-f-e. I know the
23 board doesn't rule on emotion or make its decisions on
24 emotion. But in this room tonight, I think you can see a
25 lot of emotion from people who have spent their lives

1 working this developed area. It is a very developed area
2 from people having just small homes or to people having
3 large farms. It is developed. It's developed for farming
4 and many other uses.

5 What scares me is that the developers of this
6 railroad would run as close as they have to schools. And
7 so in saying that, thinking that the board would turn that
8 down because of safety aspects and learning problems,
9 where is the other route that they have to appease us?
10 And I don't think that the people of this county or Porter
11 County or LaPorte County are looking for an appeasement.

12 If there is a problem with this railroad and if there
13 is a derailment, of which I understand there are three a
14 day in our country, derailments in our country, if there
15 is a derailment here anywhere along this route, this is
16 the Kankakee River basin and it will affect that
17 watershed.

18 Another thing I'd like to bring up, I live in south
19 county, but I work on the north end of the county. And I
20 work for a pretty large employer. And to get into our
21 facility, you have to now go over the railroad tracks. We
22 used to go over the tracks with our vehicles. Now there's
23 an overpass. And though we complained and complained
24 about getting stuck in our vehicles in between two trains
25 running, one in front of you and one behind you, and no

1 matter all the complaining we did about it, nothing was
2 ever done until a train hit a semi and rolled the coil of
3 steel through the train killing people. There's a large
4 responsibility that you have. And I appreciate you for
5 taking that. I would not want it. Thank you for hearing
6 me.

7 MR. KIECHLE: My name is Scott, two T's, Kiechle,
8 K-i-e-c-h-l-e. I live a quarter mile north of both rail
9 lines in Lake County. Several of the people before have
10 made excellent statements and pointed out a number of the
11 points I intended to do concerning the observatory,
12 concerns with the water source for the Town of Lowell.
13 10,000 residents easily affected since it's a unique area
14 where the bells and the water plant is surface water --
15 I'm sorry, groundwater under the influence of surface
16 water.

17 Any problem immediately makes it to the watershed and
18 can make it to contaminate the water system. Lowell has
19 lost many businesses over the years, and it's recently
20 secured a commercial bakery. I'm certain water is going
21 to be a key component of their needs. You lose the water,
22 you lose the business, you lose the jobs, you lose the
23 community. Several different things go to those
24 considerations.

25 One of the things that hasn't been mentioned yet is

1 there are several locations where they will be building
2 overpasses either for the rails to pass over the road or
3 the road to go over the railway. There will be additional
4 lands lost to the need to activate borrow pits to have the
5 materials for these ramps. There will be additional
6 degrading to the quality of life in obstructed views, in
7 change of airflow, in changes to groundwater tile. The
8 impacts go far beyond just the addressed footprint of the
9 railway itself.

10 The one other thing I would like to mention, and I
11 will be submitting formal comments with additional
12 details, is at the southwest corner of 2 and 65, just
13 north of the proposed rail pathway, there are a number of
14 truck stops and other businesses, at least one of which is
15 currently undergoing remediation for groundwater impact
16 from previous leaking fuel tanks. The groundwater flow in
17 this area would be towards the proposed railway. And it
18 would likely impact how that groundwater is moving and
19 could change the needs for remediation, possibly
20 aggravating the situation or even accelerating the
21 disbursal of that impacted layer.

22 I appreciate that the board has extended the comment
23 period by an additional month from the initial, from the
24 middle of May to June 15; and I look forward to submitting
25 comments. And I appreciate that you have posted and will

1 be posting all of the comments in your responses online so
2 it's readily searchable. Thank you.

3 MR. FABISH: Joseph Kenneth Fabish, F-a-b-i-s-h.
4 I go by my middle name Ken. What I wanted to say was
5 you've heard throughout this meeting people talking about
6 derauling and re-railing. That was my job for ten years.
7 And I want to tell you the smallest piece of equipment I
8 ever used to re-rail was a 60-ton all-terrain crane. I
9 have used as heavy as a 3,900 Manitowoc, which is a cab
10 crane. Most of the jobs I did were with D9 Cats that have
11 a side boom. It's like a Cat that puts in pipeline
12 underground. But I have also had to use some of the
13 cranes out of Hamlet and Whiting, which are 110- to
14 120,000-pound cranes.

15 I've done mostly U.S. Steel ladles, which are 205,000
16 pounds empty. Okay. But I have done gondolas and flat
17 cars and things like that. U.S. Steel was very good about
18 lending me to the Canadian National, to the Illinois
19 Central, and to the EJ&E to work with them. But, folks,
20 the things I wanted to tell you is I don't care where
21 you're at. If you have a re-rail, within five miles of
22 it, you're going to know it for a number of days. Okay.
23 It is extremely loud, extremely hazardous; and I'm very
24 lucky that I did not have a hazardous spill in one of my
25 re-rails. Thank you very much for your time.

1 MS. DUNN: Hi, my name is Donna Dunn, D-u-n-n.
2 And unlike most of you, I live in north county. I chose
3 to live in that rat race, and we have plenty of trains up
4 there. In fact, they're trying to force another one on
5 us. They want to spend a trillion dollars to run seven
6 miles of track for passenger service for South Shore.

7 And when this train come up, the first thing I
8 thought of they're going to connect it to that South Shore
9 track. Now they're going to have even more freight trains
10 once this gets going. But the thing is is that line is
11 going to be paid with all of our tax dollars, all of us
12 that live Lake County. All of that new wonderful Lake
13 County income tax that we all have to pay is going for
14 that project.

15 But I worked for the railroad. I was a locomotive
16 engineer for 14 years before I got tired of being on call
17 all the time. Somebody mentioned that NS track that goes
18 through Streator to Schneider, takes a left turn and goes
19 up to Hammond. I used run those trains on those lines.

20 Couple of things, a lot of people have brought up
21 about derailments. And there are derailments nationwide
22 throughout every year. Some of them you hear about; some
23 of them you don't. I know a lot of people have brought up
24 about the watershed, which is very, very important. But I
25 think one thing that you may not know is that we carry a

1 lot of hazardous material. We carry inhalation hazards.
2 We carry stuff that's so volatile, if it leaks out and you
3 breathe it, you die. And with this stuff, if we have a
4 derailment with this kind of stuff like we had down in
5 Tennessee when we had to evacuate whole towns, this
6 stuff, some of you will be --

7 If this goes through, some of you will be living near
8 the tracks. Some you will be living far from the tracks
9 thinking you're safe, but you're not going to be because
10 if this stuff gets in the air, it can go whichever way the
11 wind is blowing. So that's another thing that needs to be
12 taken into consideration.

13 We also have -- in Chicago, we have this CREATE
14 project, which somebody had mentioned earlier. This
15 CREATE project has -- you know, what I read in the article
16 about 33 hours to get from one side of the City of Chicago
17 to the other, yeah, that used to be true. That's not true
18 anymore. I don't know where this Mr. Patton is from, but
19 he obviously doesn't know anything about railroading. It
20 doesn't take that long anymore.

21 Another thing, who's going to run their trains on
22 these tracks? Union Pacific and CSX have already said
23 they're not interested. So who's going to be running on
24 these tracks? And right now with the economy in the slump
25 that we're in, our rail yard is empty. We barely have

1 enough trains with the coal business down, the oil
2 business down, we barely have enough trains to run our own
3 lines. The last thing we're going to do is run them on
4 theirs.

5 Another thing is somebody was talking rural cleanup.
6 I have been on derailment sites before where we have had
7 to plow roads through people's fields, through people's
8 yards to get the equipment behind their property. And
9 sometimes it doesn't look as good when we're done.

10 So and another thing is with this eminent domain, I
11 personally have a big issue, not only with the government
12 taking our properties in eminent domain, but also with a
13 private industry being allowed to do it. It's not right
14 and it needs to stop. Thank you very much.

15 MS. ZIEMKE: So Donna's the last person I had a
16 card for. Is there anyone else in the audience who would
17 like to take this opportunity to comment?

18 MS. FINLEY: My name is Laura Finley,
19 F-i-n-l-e-y. I'm a local real estate broker with Century
20 21 Affiliated. I want to bring up two points. One is the
21 impact on our real estate. Mr. Patton stated in one of
22 the many articles I've read it won't affect the house
23 unless it is right next to the train tracks. I'm licensed
24 and have been in this town -- I previously was manager at
25 McColly. I'm licensed in Indiana and in Illinois. I

1 previously was from Dalton, okay, have lived in multiple
2 states, including Florida and Tennessee.

3 I will tell you right now if I am out showing a home
4 and a train goes by a half a mile away, those people say
5 goodbye. We have survived one of the worst recessions. I
6 was born in the '60s, so I saw the Carter recession.
7 Okay. We survived one of the worst recessions we have
8 seen since the '70s. This community survived that, even
9 though when Illiana came in we had to deal with people
10 taking hits on their properties, people calling and saying
11 how close is the Illiana going to be, blah, blah, blah,
12 blah, blah.

13 We have already experienced calls about this fiasco.
14 Okay. We're already feeling that impact at our office.
15 And it is ridiculous. I spoke also and confronted the
16 gentleman that wanted to bring in that mess in West Creek
17 for the garbage recycling and said to him how am I
18 supposed to promote our town, great schools? Again, we
19 have people coming here because we have a great program
20 for special needs children. My kids, all four of them
21 graduated from high school here. All four of them got
22 accepted into Purdue, two directly into the nursing
23 program, which is almost unheard of.

24 This is going to destroy our area. And it's not fair
25 that we are having to deal with this. I'm just appalled

1 at what it's going to do to alleviate 15 percent of
2 congestion in Chicago. It's their problem. It's not
3 ours. It's not ours. And I don't think that it's fair
4 that our children and our property values have to deal
5 with their problem.

6 The other thing real quick, I don't know if any of
7 you have ever seen it; but I do not feel that we should
8 have to deal with those hazardous waste postcards, if
9 you've ever received one, stating hazardous wastes are
10 going to be transported on the railroad, be prepared.
11 I've lived through a hurricane in Florida and have one of
12 those postcards saying that you need to have yourself
13 prepared for a hazardous waste spill, have duct tape, go
14 in your basement, have five days worth of food, water
15 supply and duct tape your windows and your basement, turn
16 off all your power supply and everything until the
17 hazardous waste is cleaned up.

18 They do have them and they send them out when --
19 they're supposed to send them out when they transport
20 hazardous waste. That is what we're going to have to deal
21 with, and it's not fair. Again, Laura Finley going on
22 record. We don't need it.

23 MR. PINKERTON: How are you doing? Bryon Lee
24 Pinkerton, B-r-y-o-n, L-e-e, P-i-n-k-e-r-t-o-n. I'm
25 assuming that you guys have the same map that's back there

1 that's the map that you guys work with. And all along
2 that line is numbered from the Illinois side all the way
3 through the entire route. I'd like to direct your
4 attention between points 36 and 34. This is over by
5 Hancock Street and Montgomery Street.

6 I'm not an engineer. All right. But I played with
7 trains and stuff as a kid. And you're crossing a creek in
8 four places, and one of the places that you're crossing is
9 at grade on a road. And this is the most zigzag rail line
10 I've ever seen in my life. When if this thing was moved
11 over about a quarter mile, you would cross it once. I
12 mean, I think if you're crossing a creek in four different
13 places in a half a mile, you've got some hydrology issues
14 there. So I would like if you could possibly focus your
15 attention on that area between points 36 and 34 in
16 relation to hydrology.

17 Also, Mr. Hoffman and Mr. Hildebrandt are right, are
18 totally right in that area by Clay Street. You ever try
19 and drive a full grain truck up a hill? It don't move
20 real quick. You can give it all you got and stuff, but
21 it's only going to go so fast. A train's got to come
22 around a curve and then go up a hill. I don't think it's
23 going to move real fast. And it's crossing Route 2. And
24 if you're turning on Clay Street, you're going to have to
25 sit there and wait and wait and wait on Route 2 and wait

1 and wait and wait until it's across Clay Street. It's not
2 going to move real fast fully loaded going up a hill and
3 around a curve.

4 Secondly, let's look at this in reverse. You're
5 fully loaded. You're going to come downhill now. And you
6 got to come downhill, and you got to cross a state highway
7 and make a curve fully load. You're not exactly going to
8 slow down real fast either. So there's quite a bit of
9 concern from the I-65 cut across to Clay Street and
10 especially, like I said, the points at 36 to 34 on your
11 map here as far as hydrology. That's all. Thank you.

12 MS. ZIEMKE: Is there anyone else in the audience
13 who would like to make a comment?

14 MR. WAITROCK: My name is Waitrock,
15 W-a-i-t-r-o-c-k, long time farmer, resident here all my
16 life. I think we need to sum this up as to how it's going
17 to affect our lives, not necessarily our lives, but our
18 kids' lives, our ambulances, our fire department, all of
19 those that we need to look at what's the effect going to
20 be on us here, and I hate to say it, Mr. Patton's money?

21 How many railroads have said they would go; how many
22 won't? Is this a toll road? If he charges too much, is
23 the railroad going to come over? And it's going to hurt
24 us for the effect of a few. That's the whole thing here.
25 Do we need this railroad? When Monon came in here years

1 ago and our ancestors, that helps the town. Now railroads
2 don't do it.

3 Who puts this idea in to Mr. Patton? He tried to get
4 through the Illiana; it didn't work. If he doesn't do
5 this, he's going to do something else. It's personal
6 money. Financial investors want to make money at our
7 expense. So let it go. Don't do it. Thank you for your
8 time. Thank you very much.

9 MS. ZIEMKE: All right. It doesn't look like I
10 have anyone else who would like to come up. We'd like to
11 thank everyone for coming this evening. To all of you who
12 gave oral comments, we really appreciate it. And all of
13 you who didn't give oral comments, please take the time to
14 make your comments either electronically or they can be
15 mailed in.

16 We do have some comment forms up here to the right.
17 And also just to reiterate that the comment period has
18 been extended to June 15. So you have a little bit more
19 time. And also Phillis and Dave will be here if you have
20 some questions you'd like to speak to them about after
21 this. That would be great. Thank you very much.

22 (The hearing adjourned at 8:22 p.m.)

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CERTIFICATE

I, Angela J. Galipeau, a Notary Public, in and for the County of Porter and State Of Indiana, do hereby certify the foregoing pages were reported by me and 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.



Angela J. Galipeau, RPR, CSR
Notary Public, State of Indiana
Residence: Porter County
Commission Expires: 4-23-17

	35:18;36:21;48:21; 49:1;55:13,14;76:16, 17;87:1,9	45:25;56:8;77:16; 83:22;87:17	all-terrain (1) 80:8	42:7
\$			almost (1) 84:23	anxiety (1) 37:25
\$1.1 (1) 46:2	action (2) 9:12;14:3	affected (11) 9:23;22:16,21;30:6; 36:2;41:24;46:3;57:3, 4;61:20;78:13	alone (2) 33:22,25	anymore (3) 68:2;82:18,20
\$100,000 (2) 48:9,16	activate (1) 79:4	affects (1) 31:3	along (15) 5:19;18:13;21:22; 34:10;35:17;36:13; 53:16;66:25;67:7,17, 23;68:4;71:25;77:15; 86:1	apologize (2) 4:13;5:12
\$17,000 (1) 34:7	activities (1) 57:17	Affiliated (1) 83:20	alter (1) 27:17	appalled (1) 84:25
\$5 (1) 27:13	actual (1) 67:17	Again (27) 5:3,9,14;10:10,16, 19;11:22;12:14; 13:24;14:4,12;20:2,4; 28:11,12;35:6;43:24; 44:14,23;52:19,22; 59:10;67:8,15;71:16; 84:18;85:21	alternate (5) 23:12;29:16;38:1; 45:9;63:11	apparently (1) 5:14
\$60,000 (1) 34:5	actually (5) 7:2;15:23;42:1; 67:23;68:11	against (7) 21:23;23:9;41:25; 56:19;57:23;61:2; 72:18	alternation (1) 27:17	appears (2) 12:6;16:17
\$70,000 (1) 48:8	Adam (2) 54:12;68:7	age (1) 67:19	alternation (5) 23:12;29:16;38:1; 45:9;63:11	appease (1) 77:9
A	A-d-a-m (1) 68:7	agencies (8) 8:23,24;11:1,2; 12:18,20;16:15;17:2	alternative (11) 8:11;9:11,12,15; 11:25;12:5,10;18:3; 37:7;63:10;74:23	appeasement (1) 77:11
AA (2) 45:21,21	add (2) 40:10,11	agency (11) 6:10,21,25;11:23; 13:8,9;14:1;16:10,15; 30:3;65:4	alternatives (4) 9:4,14;63:16,17	appendices (1) 11:10
abbreviated (1) 29:25	added (1) 44:25	agency's (1) 15:6	Although (1) 51:18	applicant (1) 18:3
ability (3) 22:4,17;71:4	adding (4) 33:12;40:13,17; 71:21	agenda (1) 5:16	altogether (2) 23:13;38:1	applicant's (2) 13:4;14:3
able (17) 10:9;15:9,25;17:1; 18:2;19:4;40:16; 43:15;49:4;56:11; 60:21;63:7;64:24; 67:4;68:5;70:16,21	addition (3) 37:6;44:25;68:15	aggravating (1) 79:20	always (1) 11:1	appointments (1) 44:8
above (1) 47:15	Additional (3) 36:17;37:11;63:4	ago (8) 23:23;31:14;32:15; 44:17;51:11;54:21; 72:1;88:1	amazing (1) 31:20	appreciate (4) 78:4;79:22,25; 88:12
absolutely (2) 65:21;68:1	address (13) 7:24;10:13;11:15, 18;15:7;16:6;31:8; 35:13;42:12;43:1; 58:3;65:10;73:22	agency's (1) 15:6	ambulance (2) 44:10;74:19	appreciated (1) 4:16
absurd (1) 64:23	addresses (2) 15:21;30:6	agenda (1) 5:16	ambulances (1) 87:18	approach (1) 75:19
academic (1) 69:22	adequately (1) 63:15	aggravating (1) 79:20	Americans (1) 65:18	appropriately (1) 11:16
accelerating (1) 79:20	adjacent (1) 46:14	ago (8) 23:23;31:14;32:15; 44:17;51:11;54:21; 72:1;88:1	amount (3) 32:12;37:16;48:24	approval (1) 63:2
accepted (1) 84:22	adjoined (1) 88:22	agree (3) 24:23;51:23;52:6	Analysis (6) 5:1,5;6:6;10:5; 11:24;30:18	approve (6) 7:12,12;12:16,16, 19;75:7
access (5) 15:12;34:15;45:11; 62:13,15	adopted (1) 30:19	agricultural (1) 54:4	analytical (3) 9:24,25;11:15	approved (2) 12:4;28:1
accident (5) 32:5;50:22;51:25; 56:17;73:9	adopting (1) 54:17	agriculture (4) 49:7,19;54:4;62:1	analyze (1) 75:5	appropriately (1) 73:17
accidents (4) 40:18,22,25;45:2	adults (1) 47:4	ahead (1) 74:1	analyzed (1) 75:3	April (1) 18:23
accommodate (2) 13:21;49:15	advance (1) 23:24	air (2) 35:22;82:10	ancestors (1) 88:1	aquifer (2) 22:25;60:23
accomplish (1) 53:2	advanced (1) 70:24	airflow (1) 79:7	Andy (1) 73:16	area (56) 3:10;13:17;14:11; 22:11,15,22,23;23:1; 25:14,15;26:13,22; 27:2,6;28:13;31:18; 32:3;35:2;37:3;40:8; 41:22;43:7;44:2,12, 21;45:5;46:4,7,25; 49:9,12,18;54:3;57:9, 10;58:4;60:19;62:3; 65:12;66:5,13;67:6; 68:6;71:2,5;73:20,21, 23;74:22;77:1,1; 78:13;79:17;84:24; 86:15,18
According (2) 49:5;54:22	advantage (3) 4:5;30:13;34:22	Alan (1) 6:15	ANGERMAN (3) 50:13,13;64:6	areas (11)
acres (6) 39:7;46:14;48:2,5, 9;53:17	advisory (1) 27:12	alignment (4) 3:9;17:25;18:1,13	A-n-g-e-r-m-a-n (1) 50:14	
acronyms (1) 68:18	affect (9) 22:4,10;31:4;38:20;	alleviate (1) 85:1	angle (4) 55:17,19,21,22	
across (13) 15:11;26:12;30:9;		Allow (2) 53:8,12	annihilate (1) 23:7	
		allowed (2) 48:1;83:13	antagonistic (1) 32:2	
			anthill (1)	

22:18;23:6;29:16; 45:8;49:8;56:2;61:10, 20,25;62:4,21	authority (2) 6:25;13:9	based (3) 11:25;18:2;19:6	40:5;45:3,24,25;59:4, 11;72:14;83:11	57:18
Army (1) 12:22	Autistic (1) 37:24	basement (2) 85:14,15	bigger (1) 10:17	border (2) 35:16,17
around (13) 3:14;6:16;17:15,23; 45:9;48:12;58:4;60:2; 67:3;72:5;73:19; 86:22;87:3	automatically (1) 17:22	Basically (2) 41:18;48:20	biggest (4) 30:16;31:23;56:18; 71:17	borders (1) 36:13
array (1) 37:4	available (9) 5:24,25;10:9;11:22; 15:4;16:7;17:14,17, 21	Basin (13) 5:2,23;9:6,9,17; 13:11,24;17:3;27:14; 35:3,14;60:15;77:16	Bill (2) 24:16;25:19	bore (1) 69:8
article (1) 82:15	Avenue (4) 33:9;44:2;58:2,9	basis (1) 60:17	billed (1) 30:16	born (1) 84:6
articles (2) 49:21;83:22	avoid (4) 8:13,14;49:8;70:5	bead (1) 66:5	bills (1) 61:19	borrow (1) 79:4
artifact (1) 66:8	avoiding (1) 13:22	beads (1) 66:6	bins (1) 44:20	both (8) 14:17;30:9;42:13, 18;44:5;47:22;60:7; 78:8
aspect (1) 72:13	aware (2) 16:3;66:8	beat (1) 60:13	birds (1) 39:3	bottom (2) 71:18;74:6
aspects (2) 72:10;77:8	away (8) 22:2;26:5,25;32:4; 39:6;61:8;69:3;84:4	beautiful (1) 39:7	bit (9) 4:12;24:19;29:21; 30:14;50:25;51:11; 69:18;87:8;88:18	bound (1) 60:23
assisting (1) 6:14	B	beauty (1) 71:2	blah (5) 84:11,11,11,12,12	boundaries (1) 37:2
assume (2) 25:25;47:23	back (25) 3:8,9,15;5:15; 10:17,17;11:17; 14:20;15:10;16:6; 17:14;18:1,11;19:16, 17;20:20;21:20; 25:25;26:2;27:19; 28:12;46:14;63:22; 67:25;85:25	become (1) 55:15	BLANDFORD (2) 38:3,3	box (4) 15:22,24;45:10; 54:2
assuming (1) 85:25	backed (1) 21:25	becomes (1) 46:4	B-l-a-n-d-f-o-r-d (1) 38:4	branches (1) 14:23
asteroid (1) 70:1	background (1) 29:21	bed (1) 75:1	BLANKENSHIP (2) 31:10,10	Break (1) 4:8
asteroids (1) 70:4	backing (1) 63:6	beds (1) 24:3	B-l-a-n-k-e-n-s-h-i-p (1) 31:11	breaking (1) 31:24
Astronomical (14) 32:20;33:4,15,16, 19;34:4,12,20,24; 35:6,7;53:10;56:9; 68:12	backup (1) 60:25	begin (2) 48:25;56:7	blockages (1) 24:6	breaks (1) 42:17
Astronomy (7) 33:8;34:18;46:16; 68:14,21;69:21,23	backyard (1) 52:4	begins (1) 19:18	blocked (1) 44:18	breathe (1) 82:3
Astrophotography (2) 33:11;34:15	bad (2) 23:25;32:13	behalf (3) 32:22;35:6;46:10	blocking (1) 64:17	breeding (1) 22:18
at-grade (1) 74:20	badly (1) 46:8	behind (5) 20:20;25:11;49:21; 77:25;83:8	blowing (1) 82:11	bridge (1) 76:17
attach (3) 16:1,2,2	bakery (1) 78:20	bells (2) 22:3;78:14	blue (2) 15:11;16:17	bridges (1) 12:25
attached (1) 33:20	bankruptcy (1) 43:17	belong (1) 57:12	Board (38) 3:2,13;4:25;5:4,19; 6:5,19,20,21;7:2,8; 12:6,6,9,19;13:7; 23:15;24:25;25:1; 30:3;31:12;32:19; 35:4;43:19;54:17,18; 59:25;62:13;63:22, 23;66:23;67:1;73:16; 75:7,17;76:23;77:7; 79:22	brief (1) 3:23
attachments (1) 16:1	bar (2) 15:11;16:17	Belshaw (6) 35:18;37:10,12,13; 73:4,12	boards (3) 3:10;26:23;29:4	briefly (2) 3:3;65:12
attack (2) 26:5;64:12	barely (2) 82:25;83:2	benefit (3) 24:10;38:9;41:7	Board's (1) 5:25	bring (10) 20:1;42:16;67:1; 72:20;73:14,20; 74:18;77:18;83:20; 84:16
attend (1) 34:19	barn (1) 46:23	benefits (1) 63:8	Bob (1) 75:18	brings (2) 40:22;53:20
attention (4) 4:10;40:3;86:4,15	BASALA (4) 46:9,9;53:6,6	besides (1) 44:6	body (1) 30:4	brochure (3) 14:21;15:8;16:6
attract (1) 39:5	B-a-s-a-l-a (2) 46:10;53:6	best (1) 68:1	boom (1) 80:11	broken (1) 48:18
attractive (1) 36:7	baseball (1) 25:12	better (5) 29:14;43:21;54:14; 56:13;63:13	booth (1) 80:11	broker (1) 83:19
audience (4) 31:20;50:10;83:16; 87:12		betterment (1) 53:18		brought (2) 81:20,23
		beyond (2) 51:4;79:8		Bryon (1) 85:23
		big (12) 4:11;29:1,7;32:5;		B-r-y-o-n (1) 85:24

buck (1) 49:23	69:7	36:3,5,16;59:25	charges (1) 87:22	clarification (1) 11:7
Buckley (18) 21:24;22:11;33:2; 46:12,14,16,17,24; 47:6,11;53:11,14,24; 57:10,18,19,19;73:1	call (4) 20:6;21:19;26:3; 81:16	cars (3) 43:10,13;80:17	Chase (2) 33:9;68:14	clarify (1) 5:8
budgetary (1) 51:4	called (6) 13:4;15:14;16:18, 20;18:6;74:12	CARTER (3) 29:19,19;84:6	check (1) 19:19	Class (2) 13:14,16
build (8) 9:13;24:12;49:23; 63:19;75:23;76:6,14, 16	calling (2) 19:20;84:10	C-a-r-t-e-r (1) 29:20	checked (1) 74:16	classes (2) 38:20;69:23
builder (2) 24:9;32:2	calls (1) 84:13	CAS (6) 33:5,10;34:10,16; 47:7;69:1	checking (1) 76:19	classroom (1) 40:2
building (9) 33:21;34:2,8;41:17; 46:1;69:3,5,11;79:1	calm (1) 42:8	case (3) 30:23;43:15;60:18	checkmark (2) 19:22,24	Clay (8) 45:17;46:7;58:8; 74:21;86:18,24;87:1, 9
buildings (1) 47:2	Calumet (15) 32:19;33:4,8,15; 34:4,12,18,20,24; 35:5,7;46:16;56:9; 68:12,14	Cat (1) 80:11	Chemical (2) 22:10;67:12	cleaned (1) 85:17
built (9) 8:18;34:2;46:23; 48:1;60:16,20;72:1, 17;73:24	came (9) 18:13;19:8,23; 44:22;54:21;71:12; 74:4;84:9;87:25	catch (1) 20:3	chemicals (1) 60:23	cleaning (1) 43:21
bunch (1) 18:9	campus (1) 70:13	category (1) 76:8	cherished (1) 72:10	cleanup (1) 83:5
Burlington (1) 76:3	can (41) 3:11;4:9;10:19; 11:13;15:14,23;16:1, 2,2,4,16,21;17:3,15, 20,22;19:1;20:1,7,9; 21:18,20;24:15,22; 26:3;28:3;32:15,16; 33:23;34:13;42:14; 52:2;64:9;72:25;73:2; 76:14,24;78:18; 82:10;86:20;88:14	Cats (1) 80:10	Chicago (13) 13:17,19;28:10; 38:12,15;43:22,23; 64:9;65:3;67:3;82:13, 16;85:2	clear (1) 29:8
Burns (1) 34:3	Canada (1) 43:6	cause (4) 33:22;37:20;39:25; 58:13	Chicagoland (3) 35:2;67:6;68:6	clearly (1) 20:7
bus (12) 24:7;36:22,23,24; 38:23,24;40:7,9,11, 16;49:13;71:24	Canadian (1) 80:18	causes (1) 42:18	Chicago's (1) 38:8	click (3) 15:17,19;17:21
buses (7) 22:8;38:18;40:13; 44:15;49:15;71:20,22	capacity (2) 13:20;40:24	causing (1) 22:7	Chief (1) 53:7	close (19) 17:23;18:2,3;35:5, 16;36:11,20;37:2,10, 10,18;39:8;48:2;69:9, 19;72:4,11;77:6; 84:11
busiest (1) 55:20	car (2) 14:16;28:11	Cedar (2) 25:11;31:11	children (18) 22:6,7;35:3;36:6; 37:24;39:21;40:7; 41:3;46:4;47:4;50:1, 3;51:10;52:9;71:24; 72:24;84:20;85:4	closely (2) 26:7;62:6
business (4) 28:20;78:22;83:1,2	carbon (1) 37:7	cell (2) 4:15;19:17	children's (2) 52:8;71:21	closes (1) 45:1
businesses (3) 27:4;78:19;79:14	card (5) 19:19,22;20:1,17; 83:16	Center (10) 33:8,15;34:18,25; 46:16;48:11,12; 53:10;68:14;73:19	choir (1) 57:16	closest (1) 61:11
busloads (1) 45:11	care (3) 28:10,14;80:20	centers (1) 13:23	chose (5) 42:6,7;45:13;72:24; 81:2	Closing (1) 75:6
butt (1) 35:16	careers (1) 70:24	Central (1) 80:19	Chris (2) 51:17;64:5	coal (1) 83:1
button (2) 16:18,20	careful (1) 28:21	cents (1) 36:25	Church (10) 45:16,18,19,20,22, 23;57:11,11,15,18	Coast (1) 12:24
buttons (1) 15:12	cargo (2) 40:19;41:1	century (4) 31:1,1,49;24;83:19	churches (1) 22:11	coil (1) 78:2
buy (1) 76:14	carriers (2) 43:2,12	certain (3) 18:13;62:4;78:20	circled (1) 74:22	collapsed (1) 44:19
bypass (1) 13:19	carries (1) 37:20	certainly (2) 30:24;59:16	circles (1) 48:12	colleagues (1) 68:12
C	carry (4) 43:4;81:25;82:1,2	certified (2) 40:20;74:8	citizen (1) 29:20	collect (1) 30:1
cab (1) 80:9	carrying (4) 41:3	chance (1) 21:6	citizens (3) 35:1;53:18;59:21	collection (1) 9:22
cabin (1) 47:2		change (4) 27:5;30:2;79:7,19	City (3) 64:8,11;82:16	collisions (1) 70:5
calculations (1)		changed (1) 5:13	civil (1) 24:18	combined (1) 53:19
		changes (1) 79:7	claims (1) 63:7	combines (2) 53:15;54:13
		chapter (1) 11:12		comfortable (1) 15:22
		charge (1) 41:12		coming (15)
		charged (1) 41:3		

3:3;4:11;5:11,12, 15:13;24,25;14:4; 16:9;21:9;32:14;53:4; 62:8;84:19;88:11	comprehend (1) 22:5	constitution (1) 30:19	corner (1) 79:12	court (1) 20:5
comment (19) 4:1,20;5:24;10:14; 11:16;19:13,18,25; 24:15;32:2;47:20; 66:9;75:6,15;79:22; 83:17;87:13;88:16,17	computations (1) 69:7	constraints (1) 51:4	Corp (1) 71:10	cousins (1) 74:4
commenting (1) 60:6	computer (2) 9:24;17:20	construct (5) 6:24;7:1,13;13:10; 14:15	Corporation (3) 35:9;49:12;71:17	cover (2) 43:17;48:25
comments (37) 4:3,23;8:22;10:11, 18,20,21,22,23,24; 11:1,5,18;12:12; 15:15,18,23;16:5,11, 14;19:4,6;20:25;21:4, 10,11;30:1;39:15; 62:20;63:7;75:15; 79:11,25;80:1;88:12, 13,14	concede (1) 69:14	constructed (1) 13:8	Corps (1) 12:22	covering (1) 48:10
commercial (3) 27:3;62:5;78:20	concentrate (1) 22:4	construction (5) 48:18;74:2;75:8,8, 16	Correspondence (3) 16:20,22;17:1	covers (1) 26:21
commission (4) 23:22;26:24;27:3; 61:22	concern (6) 49:17;50:23;51:9; 61:4;62:2;87:9	consulting (2) 3:17;6:9	corridor (2) 28:8;62:24	crane (2) 80:8,10
Commissioner (3) 25:1;26:3;52:11	concerned (7) 30:10;32:7;39:24; 40:6,17;56:24;57:7	contact (1) 37:24	corridors (1) 62:21	cranes (2) 80:13,14
Commissioners (1) 21:22	concerning (1) 78:11	contacted (1) 23:21	COSGROVE (2) 65:9,9	crazy (1) 57:22
communications (1) 16:9	concerns (14) 4:6;18:5;35:21; 40:24;41:2;50:16,18; 51:12;56:18;58:3; 60:12;62:8;68:9; 78:12	contaminant (2) 41:15,18	C-o-s-g-r-o-v-e (1) 65:10	create (6) 25:9;28:14;42:16; 53:19;82:13,15
communities (4) 7:23;9:22;36:9; 42:22	concrete (1) 69:6	contaminants (1) 46:3	cost (6) 22:17;34:4,7,11; 36:25;70:10	created (2) 29:5,5
community (28) 7:22;24:4;30:5,7; 36:7;37:12;39:19,21; 42:8;43:4,6;45:16,19, 20;46:5;51:15;52:9; 54:14,21;57:9;60:8; 64:9,22;65:5;67:15; 71:10;78:23;84:8	condemnation (1) 30:20	contaminate (1) 78:18	costly (1) 42:15	creating (1) 58:13
commuter (1) 31:17	conditions (2) 7:12;12:16	contaminated (4) 32:6;41:21;42:24; 60:23	costs (2) 37:5;48:8	Creek (16) 25:11;27:12;31:11; 39:7;45:22;56:22; 58:3;61:2,7;66:12; 73:23;75:2,12;84:16; 86:7,12
company (5) 27:25;28:8;43:16; 44:11;60:15	conductive (1) 34:14	contamination (2) 56:17;60:12	Council (7) 23:17;27:12;30:4; 50:14;51:18,19;64:5	Crete (1) 43:21
complained (2) 77:23,23	confident (1) 59:25	contents (1) 12:12	Councilman (1) 64:4	crew (1) 64:18
complaining (1) 78:1	confronted (1) 84:15	continuation (1) 39:14	Councilwoman (1) 64:6	critical (1) 35:3
completely (3) 23:14;44:17;70:6	congested (1) 13:19	continue (2) 32:16;34:25	counties (1) 60:3	crops (1) 67:9
complex (1) 65:15	congestion (4) 38:8,9;42:5;85:2	continued (1) 47:16	counting (1) 48:3	cross (11) 36:14;38:6,23,24; 49:15;55:16;57:13; 58:9;61:15;86:11; 87:6
complicated (1) 17:7	connect (2) 76:2;81:8	continues (4) 14:24;58:9;59:12; 76:10	country (7) 6:25;30:9;36:14,21; 66:3;77:14,14	crosses (3) 55:17;58:7,8
component (1) 78:21	connected (1) 57:2	continuous (1) 22:5	countryside (1) 53:23	crossing (7) 37:10;44:15;64:17; 86:7,8,12,23
components (2) 53:16;54:1	connects (1) 75:25	contract (1) 34:16	County (54) 21:22,23,25;23:5, 13,17,21;24:17,17; 25:3,3,4,6;26:10,10, 24;27:2,10;33:2,6; 34:17;38:13;43:22; 44:22;46:11;47:13, 14,25;48:21;53:7,14, 17,18;54:5,16;60:9; 61:1,22,23,25;62:3,3; 65:13;66:20;68:13; 77:10,11,11,19,19; 78:9;81:2,12,13	crossings (9) 22:9;40:10;44:14; 45:1;58:10,12;61:12, 16;74:20
	conservation (1) 62:2	contractors (1) 34:10	county's (1) 27:7	crowd (2) 4:11;29:14
	consider (7) 7:11;12:10,14;14:1; 50:11;51:12;75:14	convenience (2) 75:9,14	couple (4) 9:3;19:15;59:23; 81:20	CSX (1) 82:22
	considerable (1) 37:16	conversation (1) 51:22	course (1) 69:22	current (2) 36:18;40:16
	consideration (2) 53:5;82:12	conversations (1) 51:13	courses (1) 68:22	currently (9) 12:7;14:5;31:11; 36:11,22;49:7;65:3; 70:20;79:15
	considerations (2) 12:1;78:24	converted (1) 67:14		cursor (1) 16:19
	considered (1) 50:18	Conway (4) 33:11,25;47:8; 68:15		
	considers (1) 7:2	coordination (1) 63:13		
	constant (1) 38:19	copy (1) 42:1		
		corn (1) 49:3		

<p>curve (5) 58:18;59:10;86:22; 87:3,7</p> <p>curves (1) 59:8</p> <p>curving (1) 58:18</p> <p>customers (1) 14:18</p> <p>cut (9) 23:2;36:21;40:15; 55:13;67:8;68:5;73:4; 75:3;87:9</p> <p>cut-off (1) 24:6</p> <p>cuts (2) 49:1;55:13</p> <p>Cutting (2) 37:13;72:16</p>	<p>days (7) 25:25;30:18;40:12; 44:21;57:20;80:22; 85:14</p> <p>de (1) 63:18</p> <p>deal (6) 25:10;84:9,25;85:4, 8,20</p> <p>DEARDORFF (3) 45:14,15;57:12</p> <p>D-e-a-r-d-o-r-f-f (1) 45:15</p> <p>deaths (1) 36:9</p> <p>Debra (3) 35:8;51:10;52:6</p> <p>D-e-b-r-a (1) 35:8</p> <p>decades (1) 6:12</p> <p>deceptively (1) 62:19</p> <p>decide (1) 4:11</p> <p>decision (6) 7:12;12:15,22,24; 51:14;63:18</p> <p>decisions (5) 12:19,20,21;13:2; 76:23</p> <p>decrease (1) 38:7</p> <p>deep (2) 33:19;41:11</p> <p>defined (1) 62:18</p> <p>definite (1) 62:2</p> <p>definitely (6) 22:3;41:25;54:15; 56:14;66:9;75:13</p> <p>degrading (1) 79:6</p> <p>delays (4) 24:7;38:20;40:10; 58:13</p> <p>demand (2) 67:20;68:6</p> <p>demonstrate (1) 75:12</p> <p>deny (4) 7:13;12:17;23:10; 75:16</p> <p>denying (1) 75:10</p> <p>Department (6) 33:7;40:24;53:8; 68:13;69:20;87:18</p> <p>departments (1) 32:9</p> <p>depend (1) 22:24</p>	<p>depending (1) 48:9</p> <p>deputy (1) 6:5</p> <p>derailing (1) 80:6</p> <p>derailment (12) 32:5,9;43:5;50:22; 51:1;52:1,3;60:22; 77:13,15;82:4;83:6</p> <p>derailments (4) 35:25;77:14;81:21, 21</p> <p>describe (1) 18:12</p> <p>described (1) 62:18</p> <p>describing (1) 18:12</p> <p>description (1) 5:22</p> <p>deserve (1) 30:18</p> <p>designated (2) 33:15;37:16</p> <p>destroy (2) 45:12;84:24</p> <p>destroyed (2) 43:6;47:16</p> <p>detail (3) 9:16;18:15;62:18</p> <p>details (1) 79:12</p> <p>devastated (1) 23:12</p> <p>devastating (2) 56:5;64:11</p> <p>develop (2) 30:21;33:8</p> <p>developed (6) 17:7;63:1;77:1,1,3, 3</p> <p>developers (1) 77:5</p> <p>developing (3) 10:3;53:17;54:9</p> <p>development (12) 24:4;27:1,8,8; 52:23,25;53:4,22; 62:1,5;63:21;72:3</p> <p>developmental (1) 33:12</p> <p>devoted (1) 49:7</p> <p>diagonally (4) 48:6;49:1;55:13,14</p> <p>die (1) 82:3</p> <p>diesel (1) 52:3</p> <p>different (10) 15:12;25:2;44:15; 55:14;57:14,16;</p>	<p>67:22;75:19;78:23; 86:12</p> <p>difficult (2) 37:23;62:14</p> <p>difficulty (1) 37:25</p> <p>digging (1) 27:14</p> <p>dinners (2) 45:20;57:17</p> <p>dips (2) 26:8,11</p> <p>direct (6) 44:7,10,23;46:20; 71:23;86:3</p> <p>directing (1) 11:12</p> <p>direction (2) 20:10;74:24</p> <p>directly (4) 46:15;55:12;72:16; 84:22</p> <p>director (2) 6:5;23:22</p> <p>directors (1) 32:19</p> <p>disaster (3) 22:12;43:5;51:1</p> <p>disastrous (2) 22:22;23:1</p> <p>disbursal (1) 79:21</p> <p>discoidal (1) 65:21</p> <p>discontinues (1) 76:11</p> <p>discuss (1) 5:20</p> <p>discussed (1) 62:25</p> <p>discussing (2) 63:25;64:1</p> <p>dispatched (1) 74:13</p> <p>disrupting (1) 53:22</p> <p>disruption (2) 37:21,24</p> <p>dissect (1) 27:17</p> <p>dissected (1) 38:7</p> <p>distance (1) 37:20</p> <p>distinctive (1) 53:19</p> <p>distribution (1) 61:17</p> <p>District (3) 23:17,18;26:21</p> <p>Ditch (4) 26:15,17;52:15; 59:1</p>	<p>ditches (1) 27:14</p> <p>diverted (1) 45:3</p> <p>diverting (1) 25:14</p> <p>docket (2) 16:23;75:6</p> <p>doctor's (1) 44:8</p> <p>document (9) 7:17;9:15;10:8,10, 11;11:8,13;16:2; 18:14</p> <p>documentation (2) 59:19;63:6</p> <p>documents (2) 18:7,7</p> <p>dollars (11) 34:11;48:15;52:14, 17,19;53:21;54:7,8; 70:9;81:5,11</p> <p>domain (8) 27:24;28:2,7;30:15, 20;48:24;83:10,12</p> <p>donated (5) 34:3,6,9;46:20; 47:12</p> <p>donations (1) 54:7</p> <p>done (9) 28:19;56:20;62:12; 63:14;67:13;78:2; 80:15,16;83:9</p> <p>Donna (1) 81:1</p> <p>Donna's (1) 83:15</p> <p>doomed (1) 23:25</p> <p>double (1) 14:9</p> <p>down (19) 7:2;14:21;17:23; 26:9,11;29:1;40:8; 41:20;44:22;56:16, 18;64:13;71:6;72:25; 77:8;82:4;83:1,2;87:8</p> <p>downed (2) 44:18,18</p> <p>downhill (2) 87:5,6</p> <p>download (1) 17:20</p> <p>downtown (1) 52:4</p> <p>dozens (2) 66:24;68:3</p> <p>Dr (4) 51:10;68:7;69:17; 70:2</p> <p>draft (6) 9:20;10:6,20,25;</p>
D				
<p>D9 (1) 80:10</p> <p>daily (2) 37:19;40:1</p> <p>dairy (1) 56:1</p> <p>Dale (1) 32:10</p> <p>Dalton (2) 39:9;84:1</p> <p>dam (4) 25:9;42:17,17; 48:21</p> <p>damage (2) 71:1,3</p> <p>damages (2) 43:15,18</p> <p>damaging (1) 73:12</p> <p>Dan (4) 31:10;41:8;50:24; 51:24</p> <p>dangerous (1) 22:10</p> <p>Daniel (1) 69:15</p> <p>data (1) 9:22</p> <p>Dave (7) 3:1,13;4:24,25;5:3; 21:13;88:19</p> <p>Dave's (1) 4:21</p> <p>Dawn (1) 56:21</p> <p>day (17) 29:1;34:13;37:15; 40:15,21;41:4;44:16; 45:12,12;47:23;59:1, 20,22;64:24;76:4,7; 77:14</p>				

12:11,12 drain (3) 48:15;60:20;65:15 drainage (19) 8:7;22:16;24:7,19, 25:25;2,23;26:24; 27:11,11,14,15,16,22; 48:21;52:13,14; 60:17;67:9 draining (1) 27:20 draw (1) 42:23 drinking (1) 56:17 drive (2) 52:25;86:19 drivers (1) 40:16 drop-down (1) 16:19 drum (1) 60:13 duct (2) 85:13,15 due (1) 36:19 Dumbsky (2) 71:8,8 D-u-m-b-s-k-y (1) 71:9 dump (1) 71:14 Dunes (1) 34:7 DUNN (2) 81:1,1 D-u-n-n (1) 81:1 during (4) 45:1;48:18;60:14; 74:2 duties (1) 60:1 DVORSEAK (2) 73:15,15 D-v-o-r-s-e-a-k (1) 73:16 Dyer (1) 56:7	early (1) 4:12 Earth (6) 17:17,18,18,19,22; 70:4 easier (1) 20:10 easily (1) 78:13 east (10) 14:25;44:4;55:19; 58:2,7;64:8;65:3; 66:20;73:17;76:1 east/west (1) 37:11 eat (1) 42:15 eating (1) 67:20 economic (10) 24:3;27:1,7,8; 52:23,25;53:4;70:25; 71:1;72:3 economics (1) 35:23 economy (1) 82:24 educate (1) 47:3 educates (1) 54:2 education (3) 52:8;70:22;71:4 educational (7) 34:21,23;35:2; 46:22;47:10,12;53:15 effect (2) 87:19,24 effectively (1) 69:10 effects (1) 41:6 efficiency (1) 37:7 efficient (1) 13:18 effort (1) 6:2 efforts (1) 37:9 E-Filing (2) 15:14,17 eight (4) 3:16;6:9;41:10; 46:1 eight-year-old (1) 74:3 EIS (23) 5:10,19;6:2,10,14, 15,19;7:18;9:5;10:20, 25;11:3,6,23;12:11, 12,13;62:16;63:1,1,3, 10;65:11	either (8) 24:3;59:16;72:5; 73:7,10;79:2;87:8; 88:14 EJ&E (1) 80:19 Elden (1) 58:1 Eldon (3) 21:19,19;23:16 elected (5) 21:15;23:20;28:5; 29:3,10 election (1) 31:7 electric (1) 61:14 electronic (1) 69:8 electronically (2) 15:15;88:14 Elementary (3) 21:24;35:19,20 eliminates (1) 23:13 Elkhart (1) 76:13 eloquently (2) 54:11;62:12 else (8) 21:13;28:20;29:12; 70:17;83:16;87:12; 88:5,10 e-mail (2) 23:22;66:10 emergency (20) 24:7,9;28:25;30:21; 32:8;37:14;44:21,24; 45:11;51:8;58:10; 60:13;61:9,11;73:22; 74:12,23;75:2,3,11 EMERSON (3) 24:16,16;65:11 eminent (8) 27:24;28:2,7;30:14, 20;48:24;83:10,12 emotion (3) 76:23,24,25 employer (1) 77:20 empty (2) 80:16;82:25 enabling (1) 13:18 encourage (3) 3:19;4:4;38:1 end (4) 13:1;21:5;72:19; 77:19 endanger (1) 45:11 ending (1) 14:25	endorse (1) 39:1 ends (1) 14:7 energy (2) 37:5,6 enforcement (3) 64:8;65:3,4 engaged (1) 40:4 engagement (1) 40:3 engineer (5) 24:18;25:19;59:7; 81:16;86:6 Engineers (2) 12:23;64:13 engines (1) 43:11 enjoy (1) 56:12 enormous (1) 70:19 enough (10) 4:13;5:13;15:25; 36:15;39:8;40:15; 43:17;65:19;83:1,2 entail (1) 5:20 entered (1) 34:16 enters (1) 54:25 entire (6) 12:11;41:22;43:6; 72:23;75:5;86:3 entirely (1) 52:6 entirety (1) 66:7 entity (2) 28:17;30:2 entrusted (1) 47:12 environment (3) 37:21;38:14;72:25 environmental (30) 3:10,24;5:1,5,6,19; 6:6,12;7:6,8,10,15,24; 8:6;9:1,20;10:6; 11:21,24,25;12:5,11; 15:18;16:18,20; 63:21;67:12;72:13; 76:18,19 environmentally (1) 23:11 equally (1) 9:14 equipment (8) 14:17,17;23:3; 40:25;43:7;51:3;80:7; 83:8 equipped (2)	22:12;30:25 Erik (1) 60:4 E-r-i-k (1) 60:5 errors (2) 10:14,15 especially (6) 15:9;31:21;37:14; 51:1,7;87:10 essence (2) 25:9;75:2 estate (2) 83:19,21 estimated (3) 34:4,11;58:24 etc (2) 48:4;63:14 evacuate (1) 82:5 even (15) 15:10;19:7;26:3; 28:8;37:15;40:16; 41:22;49:3,15;61:9; 70:12;71:21;79:20; 81:9;84:8 evening (15) 3:1,3,12;5:11,12, 16;6:4,9;19:21;60:4; 64:3;65:9;69:15; 75:18;88:11 evening's (1) 3:4 event (3) 50:22,25;51:8 events (1) 34:20 eventually (2) 58:20;59:2 everybody (10) 5:11,12;10:7,18,22; 19:2,3;20:24;62:11; 64:12 everyday (1) 25:13 everyone (8) 4:10,13,14;20:22; 32:7;64:3;75:2;88:11 everyone's (1) 4:9 exactly (2) 64:16;87:7 example (2) 12:21;18:8 examples (1) 63:13 excellent (3) 34:25;68:15;78:10 excellently (1) 69:4 excess (1) 48:22 excited (1)
E				
Eagle (8) 45:22;58:3;61:2,7; 66:12;73:23;75:2,12 eagles (1) 39:3 ear (1) 25:1 earlier (5) 49:15;50:25;56:10; 59:10;82:14				

71:11 exclusively (1) 65:19 Executive (1) 53:7 exemptions (1) 38:16 existing (4) 13:21;24:2;63:12, 14 expense (1) 88:7 expensive (2) 61:14,18 experience (6) 28:19;39:9;53:19; 58:19;64:7;67:4 experienced (1) 84:13 expert (1) 29:13 expertise (2) 8:24;29:17 explain (2) 17:9;19:13 explaining (1) 3:10 express (2) 46:21;68:9 expressing (1) 50:16 expression (1) 42:6 Expressway (1) 25:18 extend (2) 14:12;32:15 extended (2) 79:22;88:18 extends (1) 14:22 extensive (1) 61:14 extraordinary (1) 34:23 extremely (3) 33:16;80:23,23	70:9;77:21 fact (2) 52:12;81:4 facto (1) 63:18 facts (1) 47:15 failure (1) 24:1 fair (3) 84:24;85:3,21 fairly (1) 43:8 fall (1) 76:7 familiar (5) 13:12;17:18;36:8; 48:11;55:4 families (1) 47:5 family (8) 18:20;46:20;47:21; 50:5,6,9;60:8;74:12 family-friendly (1) 34:19 family's (1) 54:22 far (16) 8:3;15:14,24;16:9; 26:9,11;32:4;42:5; 43:21;56:11;63:8; 65:12;76:2;79:8;82:8; 87:11 farm (17) 8:6;18:4;28:3; 38:22;47:22,24,24; 48:3;50:5,6;57:1; 66:23,23;67:1,2,3; 68:3 farmer (1) 87:15 farmers (10) 23:2;25:13;42:13; 46:6;48:14;50:9; 65:16;66:8;67:5,24 farming (2) 67:15;77:3 farmland (4) 39:7;55:13,14; 72:15 farmlands (1) 67:8 farms (14) 27:3,4;47:21,23; 48:6,7;49:3;50:12; 56:1;66:24,25;67:17; 68:4;77:3 fast (7) 27:16;36:4;49:22; 86:21,23;87:2,8 faster (1) 38:16 fastest (2)	23:5,6 favor (1) 24:22 FD (1) 75:6 Fe (2) 76:2,3 federal (8) 6:21;8:23;11:2; 12:18,20;29:4,9;54:7 feel (5) 15:21;39:8,20; 41:16;85:7 feeling (2) 26:6;84:14 feet (5) 33:24;45:18;62:20; 66:13;69:3 fence (1) 41:13 few (6) 30:18,18;58:16,22; 63:24;87:24 fiasco (1) 84:13 field (8) 11:17,17;25:12; 37:1;48:12,13,15,17 fields (11) 27:21;28:23;42:14; 48:15;49:2,2,4;67:9; 68:5,6;83:7 fight (1) 60:14 fighting (3) 71:13;72:4,19 figure (1) 48:5 file (3) 15:15;17:21,25 filed (1) 43:16 files (1) 18:10 final (7) 8:25;9:3;11:6,21, 23;12:12;51:14 finally (1) 63:19 financial (4) 37:4;38:9;70:8; 88:6 financially (2) 32:11;62:14 financing (1) 42:3 find (16) 10:14;11:3,13; 16:16,25;17:10; 19:17;20:1;29:16; 36:13;37:22,25;38:1; 40:16;60:1;65:22 finding (1)	70:1 finds (1) 75:8 fine (2) 74:10,17 finished (4) 4:20,21;20:2;34:9 Finley (3) 83:18,18;85:21 F-i-n-l-e-y (1) 83:19 fire (6) 22:13;32:9,9;40:23; 44:10;87:18 firefighters (1) 32:12 firm (2) 3:17;6:9 first (9) 3:6;4:10,18;7:14; 29:23;60:11,15;64:7; 81:7 fish (1) 22:21 five (8) 12:8;25:25;38:17, 22;44:21;64:20; 80:21;85:14 five-mile (1) 75:4 five-year-olds (1) 40:2 fix (1) 48:19 flashbacks (1) 25:17 flat (2) 37:19;80:16 fleet (1) 40:13 flood (5) 22:18;25:5,6;27:21; 65:12 flooding (1) 42:18 Florida (2) 84:2;85:11 flow (3) 22:17;51:7;79:16 focus (4) 24:20;37:23;58:4; 86:14 folks (28) 3:8,16;4:2,5;23:6,8, 9;8:9,21;9:7,9,18; 10:24,25;13:11,25; 14:4;16:7,11,13;17:3, 9,18;18:9,18;56:16, 18;59:20;80:19 follow (1) 55:2 food (5) 50:12;67:2,6,20;	85:14 foot (1) 73:13 football (1) 36:14 footprint (2) 37:8;79:8 footsteps (1) 33:22 forbidden (1) 62:15 force (1) 81:4 foresee (2) 24:3,6 forever (1) 27:5 formal (2) 4:7;79:11 format (4) 3:4,22;4:4;19:3 former (1) 24:5 forming (1) 48:21 forms (1) 88:16 fortunate (1) 65:19 forward (9) 3:24;12:4;20:7; 21:9;24:15;27:10; 28:1;31:7;79:24 fought (2) 61:1;71:13 found (5) 10:20;36:7;65:21; 66:2;73:20 Foundation (4) 33:7;34:7;46:25; 68:20 founded (1) 46:19 four (9) 25:2;38:22;44:15; 74:24;76:4;84:20,21; 86:8,12 franchised (1) 61:20 Frank (2) 39:17;49:20 frankly (1) 25:18 free (2) 17:19;34:19 freight (5) 6:22;13:18;33:23; 52:16;81:9 French (1) 66:5 frequency (1) 51:6 frequently (1)
F				
FABISH (2) 80:3,3 F-a-b-i-s-h (1) 80:3 face (1) 20:9 faced (1) 55:8 facilities (1) 63:12 facility (9) 34:13,16,23;46:22; 54:13;62:22;68:16;				

45:1 fresh (1) 60:21 friends (2) 18:20;34:6 front (4) 15:10;20:17;21:3; 77:25 fuel (3) 42:20;52:3;79:16 fuels (1) 37:7 full (3) 20:15;58:24;86:19 fully (3) 87:2,5,7 funded (1) 68:20 funding (1) 71:19 funds (1) 40:14 further (2) 51:21;70:23 Furthermore (4) 52:6,11,22;65:2 future (5) 13:22;23:7;31:4; 41:5;75:15	G-i-n-a (1) 72:21 giving (2) 21:9;28:7 GLBT (1) 38:15 gnat (1) 40:3 goals (1) 69:11 goes (20) 7:2,5;12:4;42:17, 21;55:12,23;58:8; 59:2,7,12;69:6;73:6,7, 8;76:1;81:17,18;82:7; 84:4 gondolas (1) 80:16 Good (17) 3:1;8:3,4,8;28:18; 39:11,13;55:21;60:4; 64:3;65:1,9;67:20; 69:15;75:18;80:17; 83:9 goodbye (1) 84:5 Google (6) 17:17,17,18,19,22; 52:2 government (4) 24:8;28:16;61:23; 83:11 grad (1) 68:24 grade (4) 39:20;48:20;68:20; 86:9 graduated (1) 84:21 grain (2) 44:19;86:19 grandchildren (1) 57:6 grandiose (1) 49:24 grand-kids (1) 49:13 Grant (1) 44:5 grants (2) 54:7,8 grasses (1) 39:4 grave (1) 40:24 gravel (1) 34:8 Great (26) 5:2,22;9:6,9,16,17; 13:11,24;14:4;17:3; 18:9;24:24;35:3,14; 43:21;50:18,23;51:9; 54:13;60:15,17,22;	72:2;84:18,19;88:21 Greater (1) 35:1 greatly (2) 49:11;60:7 grocery (1) 44:7 ground (10) 28:2,3;31:24;33:20; 47:24;48:3;69:2,5,6,9 grounds (1) 46:15 groundwater (6) 42:20;78:15;79:7, 15,16,18 group (1) 11:23 groups (2) 34:21;54:13 grow (1) 72:9 growing (4) 23:5,6;39:9;57:7 growth (2) 23:7;72:3 GRUSZKA (2) 64:3,4 G-r-u-s-z-k-a (1) 64:4 guarantee (1) 57:5 Guard (1) 12:24 guidelines (1) 4:22 guys (5) 32:17;71:11,16; 85:25;86:1	3:21 Harbor (1) 34:3 hard (7) 27:2;40:15;45:24; 52:24;53:1;54:15; 60:14 hate (1) 87:20 Hathaway (4) 62:10,10;72:21,22 H-a-t-h-a-w-a-y (2) 62:11;72:22 Hayden (2) 47:19,19 H-a-y-d-e-n (1) 47:19 hazardous (16) 36:3,5;40:18,25; 43:3;51:1,25;59:3; 80:23,24;82:1;85:8,9, 13,17,20 hazards (1) 82:1 headache (1) 25:10 heading (1) 35:18 hear (8) 19:4;20:10,25;21:1; 25:25;57:21;75:21; 81:22 heard (13) 31:25;32:16;38:15; 50:24;53:9,10;56:24; 68:11;69:1;71:19; 75:5,20;80:5 hearing (5) 8:1,3;63:20;78:5; 88:22 hearings (1) 63:23 heart (3) 23:18;26:4;64:12 hearts (1) 72:11 heavy (3) 52:16;67:19;80:9 Hebron (1) 58:2 heck (1) 56:20 Hello (1) 73:15 help (15) 3:12;5:24;7:23; 9:12;15:4;17:4,8; 27:9,9;41:4;44:22; 56:16;68:21;69:13; 70:24 helping (3) 3:17;6:10;28:16 helps (1)	88:1 Here's (1) 14:19 Heritage (1) 33:7 Hi (5) 25:19;56:21;62:10; 68:7;81:1 high (5) 20:1;44:13;48:20; 66:5;84:21 higher (1) 40:22 Highland (1) 75:25 highly (1) 61:3 high-speed (1) 35:25 highway (3) 38:10;55:10;87:6 highways (1) 55:20 HILDEBRANDT (5) 58:1,1;60:4,5;86:17 H-i-l-d-e-b-r-a-n-d-t (1) 60:5 Hill (4) 35:20;86:19,22; 87:2 hills (1) 65:17 hilly (1) 55:24 historic (4) 33:2;46:18;52:3; 65:10 historical (2) 53:15;54:1 historically (1) 65:18 history (7) 47:5,6,7,18;52:2; 54:5;73:1 hit (4) 10:12;52:12,22; 78:2 hits (1) 84:10 hobby (1) 27:3 HOFFMAN (5) 54:20,20;58:5,17; 86:17 H-o-f-f-m-a-n (1) 54:21 hold (2) 20:17;72:9 holding (1) 38:19 home (6) 15:6;18:4;23:7; 56:8;68:16;84:3	
G					
gallons (1) 58:25 game (1) 22:22 garbage (2) 52:20;84:17 Gary (1) 75:25 gas (6) 44:8,20;55:1,2,3; 61:15 gave (2) 74:9;88:12 general (1) 51:20 generation (3) 31:3;36:4,6 generations (3) 31:4;50:5,7 genius (1) 64:25 gentleman (2) 28:18;84:16 Gerry (3) 21:19,21;52:11 gets (8) 20:25;28:19;41:19; 42:20;55:3,11;81:10; 82:10 Gina (1) 72:21					
		H			
		half (10) 23:3;31:18;32:15; 44:3;45:5;67:8;68:5; 72:16;84:4;86:13 Hamlet (1) 80:13 Hammond (1) 81:19 Hancock (1) 86:5 hand (6) 6:7;19:5,22,25; 20:1;41:25 handed (1) 73:16 handle (3) 32:8;64:24;73:25 happen (4) 48:18;52:4;55:5,5 happened (2) 31:14;52:5 happy (1)			

<p>homes (4) 22:23;36:10;58:11; 77:2</p> <p>Homestead (16) 21:24;33:2;46:12, 15,17,17,18;47:11; 53:9,11,14;57:11,18, 19,19;73:1</p> <p>hope (7) 10:14;32:15,17; 53:5;56:15,20;76:8</p> <p>hospital (1) 44:9</p> <p>hospitals (1) 61:11</p> <p>host (2) 34:17;67:2</p> <p>hour (6) 3:6;4:5;36:22;40:9; 43:4;71:20</p> <p>hours (4) 34:13;54:9,9;82:16</p> <p>house (8) 3:7,22;46:17,23; 56:25;74:15,22;83:22</p> <p>houses (1) 72:3</p> <p>Howe (4) 35:8,8;51:10;52:6</p> <p>H-o-w-e (1) 35:8</p> <p>huge (4) 25:6;32:7;62:21; 69:6</p> <p>hundred (10) 30:17;45:18;46:24; 50:7;56:14,19;58:16, 23;69:22;76:7</p> <p>Hundreds (7) 34:18;52:13,17; 53:16;54:6,6,8</p> <p>hundred-year (1) 30:17</p> <p>Hunter (1) 33:11</p> <p>hurricane (1) 85:11</p> <p>hurt (1) 87:23</p> <p>husband (2) 38:12;47:22</p> <p>hydrology (3) 86:13,16;87:11</p>	<p>identified (2) 10:4;62:4</p> <p>identify (4) 7:18,23;9:4;11:24</p> <p>ignorant (1) 52:1</p> <p>Illiana (5) 25:18;71:14;84:9, 11;88:4</p> <p>Illinois (14) 7:21;14:13,14,22, 22;26:11;39:10; 42:22;59:3;66:21; 73:7;80:18;83:25; 86:2</p> <p>image (1) 33:22</p> <p>imagine (3) 26:3;33:23;38:23</p> <p>immediately (3) 36:2;74:13;78:17</p> <p>immigrants (1) 46:19</p> <p>Impact (42) 5:6,19;9:1,20;10:6; 11:21;24:8;30:3,4,5; 36:23;37:5;39:22,24, 24;40:6;41:2;44:1; 49:9,11;50:17;51:7; 52:12;54:15;56:2,25; 57:8,10,23;64:22; 67:12,12;69:20; 70:12,19,25;71:4,23; 79:15,18;83:21;84:14</p> <p>impacted (9) 37:19;46:8;52:19, 24;66:19;67:16,17; 70:18;79:21</p> <p>impacting (1) 72:15</p> <p>impacts (12) 7:6,11;8:3,6,7,7,19; 10:4;12:23;37:8;57:9; 79:8</p> <p>implement (2) 9:21;38:22</p> <p>implementation (1) 63:12</p> <p>important (3) 21:3;23:4;81:24</p> <p>importantly (1) 38:21</p> <p>imposed (1) 12:3</p> <p>improvements (1) 63:13</p> <p>inability (1) 32:8</p> <p>inaudible (2) 23:15;74:2</p> <p>incident (1) 43:16</p> <p>include (4)</p>	<p>35:22;50:18;51:13; 63:11</p> <p>included (1) 51:21</p> <p>including (5) 12:11;18:10;39:3; 65:24;84:2</p> <p>income (1) 81:13</p> <p>incoming (1) 16:25</p> <p>inconsistent (2) 75:9,13</p> <p>increase (5) 38:8;40:11;61:6,12, 12</p> <p>increased (5) 25:14;35:24;51:2; 61:19;71:22</p> <p>increases (2) 53:20;55:14</p> <p>Increasing (2) 36:23;61:16</p> <p>increasingly (2) 53:17;54:3</p> <p>Indian (2) 47:3;66:6</p> <p>Indiana (24) 7:20;14:8,13,21; 30:19;33:3,9;35:1; 38:10;47:5;48:7; 49:13;50:5;55:20; 56:7;60:19;61:23; 65:20,24;68:17; 70:23;71:3,18;83:25</p> <p>indicate (1) 35:10</p> <p>individual (2) 56:25;57:3</p> <p>industrial (1) 62:5</p> <p>industry (2) 6:22;83:13</p> <p>influence (1) 78:15</p> <p>informal (1) 24:22</p> <p>information (16) 8:4,8,16,21;10:5; 11:11,13,19;15:3,13, 20;17:4,8,10;18:10; 29:24</p> <p>informed (1) 15:5</p> <p>inhalation (1) 82:1</p> <p>initial (1) 79:23</p> <p>input (1) 8:24</p> <p>install (1) 61:18</p> <p>instead (1)</p>	<p>47:16</p> <p>institution's (1) 68:9</p> <p>instruments (1) 33:17</p> <p>insurance (1) 43:14</p> <p>integrity (1) 43:1</p> <p>intend (1) 49:8</p> <p>intended (1) 78:11</p> <p>intention (2) 3:6;35:4</p> <p>interchange (1) 13:15</p> <p>interest (1) 65:5</p> <p>interested (4) 18:8,15;61:3;82:23</p> <p>interests (2) 60:8,8</p> <p>interference (1) 40:1</p> <p>intermodal (2) 62:22,24</p> <p>International (3) 3:16;6:13;62:15</p> <p>intersected (1) 52:16</p> <p>intersection (2) 54:24;58:5</p> <p>interstate (2) 54:24,25</p> <p>into (24) 5:21;8:5;9:2;14:14, 24;19:2;34:16;42:20; 44:7;52:25;53:5;56:1; 59:1,2,2;73:2,7,8,14; 76:8;77:20;82:12; 84:22,22</p> <p>introduce (1) 4:24</p> <p>introduced (1) 6:3</p> <p>introductions (2) 5:17;6:3</p> <p>invest (1) 42:13</p> <p>invested (2) 54:6;70:9</p> <p>investigation (1) 32:1</p> <p>investors (1) 88:6</p> <p>invited (1) 4:2</p> <p>inviting (1) 36:13</p> <p>involved (6) 5:25;43:16;51:2,15; 55:15;67:23</p>	<p>involves (1) 42:12</p> <p>Ireland (1) 46:19</p> <p>irregular (1) 49:2</p> <p>Irrigation (2) 23:2;48:8</p> <p>isolated (2) 69:4,5</p> <p>issue (17) 10:6;11:21;27:11, 23;28:5,6,7,22;29:1, 12;40:5;42:12;47:20; 58:14;59:11;67:10; 83:11</p> <p>issues (14) 7:11,18,20,22,24; 25:23;26:24;28:24; 58:6;67:9,11;69:18; 71:22;86:13</p> <p>items (1) 37:4</p>
J				
				<p>James (1) 56:6</p> <p>Janesville (1) 15:1</p> <p>Jasper (1) 26:10</p> <p>Jeff (1) 45:14</p> <p>jeopardize (2) 36:4,6</p> <p>Jim (1) 53:6</p> <p>job (3) 29:16;43:21;80:6</p> <p>jobs (2) 78:22;80:10</p> <p>Johnson-Ball (2) 3:14;6:4</p> <p>Jones (2) 66:17,17</p> <p>J-o-n-e-s (1) 66:17</p> <p>Joseph (1) 80:3</p> <p>journals (1) 70:1</p> <p>JPEGs (1) 16:2</p> <p>Jr (1) 24:16</p> <p>July (1) 43:6</p> <p>jump (1) 74:11</p> <p>jumped (1) 74:8</p> <p>jumps (2)</p>

25:5;26:25 June (3) 74:3;79:24;88:18 jurisdiction (2) 6:22,23	L	48:17 Laura (2) 83:18;85:21 Laura's (1) 19:12 law (3) 64:8;65:2,4 lawn (1) 55:18 Lawrence (1) 32:18 laws (5) 29:22;30:15,20,25; 31:8 layer (1) 79:21 lead (4) 5:2,6,7;49:2 leadership (1) 31:6 leak (2) 42:19;44:20 leaking (1) 79:16 leaks (1) 82:2 LeAnn (2) 50:13;64:6 L-e-A-n-n (1) 50:13 learn (1) 41:4 learning (4) 37:8,21;40:1;77:8 lease (1) 43:11 least (2) 31:8;79:14 leave (2) 49:5;50:3 leaving (1) 16:9 Lee (1) 85:23 L-e-e (1) 85:24 left (7) 15:11,14;20:19; 30:10;47:24;52:3; 81:18 legacy (3) 50:1,2,3 legislation (1) 29:5 legislature (1) 31:6 lending (1) 80:18 lends (1) 44:24 lengthy (1) 12:3 less (2)	44:3;69:3 letter (5) 25:19;26:2,5;53:11; 54:16 letting (1) 42:11 level (6) 29:8,9,9,9;55:24; 66:15 levels (1) 66:12 licensed (2) 83:23,25 licensing (1) 13:8 lied (1) 22:2 life (14) 23:11;36:24;38:13; 40:23;49:25;53:20; 54:4;56:8;58:19; 72:10,23;79:6;86:10; 87:16 lifestyle (2) 45:13;57:24 likely (5) 12:2,22,25;51:5; 79:18 limit (5) 20:23;32:11,23; 45:10;63:2 limits (1) 36:19 Linda (1) 65:9 Linden (2) 43:25,25 L-i-n-d-e-n (1) 44:1 line (55) 5:7,10,21;6:24;7:2, 13;8:11,18,18;9:5,10, 13,16;12:17;13:7,15, 14:5,12,20,24;18:14; 23:18;33:14;35:15; 39:2;43:23;44:3,5,20; 45:4,9,15,17;48:16; 50:16,16,17,21;57:11; 59:9;66:20,21;68:10; 69:19;70:6,14,18; 71:1;73:6;75:5;76:5, 9;81:10;86:2,9 lineage (1) 46:20 lines (10) 9:8;38:22;50:19; 55:1,2,3;69:2;78:9; 81:19;83:3 links (1) 18:6 Lisa (1) 39:16 L-i-s-a (1)	39:16 list (2) 10:8;12:3 listen (1) 30:12 listening (2) 30:11;62:8 little (13) 4:12;24:19;29:21; 30:14;44:12;48:24; 50:25;51:11;55:9; 59:13;74:9,22;88:18 live (23) 25:7;32:4;38:5,12, 14;40:8;42:6,7;44:2; 49:9;54:22;55:7;58:2, 3;72:10;73:3,17,20; 77:18;78:8;81:2,3,12 lived (3) 72:23;84:1;85:11 lives (7) 39:2;49:10,11; 76:25;87:17,17,18 living (5) 44:24;56:22;67:4; 82:7,8 load (1) 87:7 loaded (2) 87:2,5 local (18) 8:23;11:1;23:20; 24:1,8,8;26:23;29:4, 9;34:10,21;51:14; 54:8;66:23;67:1,2,20; 83:19 located (4) 33:8;41:10;46:16; 70:13 location (1) 16:10 locations (1) 79:1 locked (1) 64:13 locomotive (2) 14:16;81:15 log (1) 47:2 Logansport (1) 76:12 logged (1) 19:3 logs (1) 19:2 long (10) 14:6;28:8,11;38:24; 40:11;58:13;60:13; 72:1;82:20;87:15 longer (3) 44:24;61:9;68:5 look (22) 3:8;8:5;9:10,12;
K	lab (1) 68:24 labeled (1) 13:4 Laboratory (1) 33:12 labs (1) 68:21 lack (1) 60:25 ladles (1) 80:15 laid (1) 17:13 Lake (40) 21:22;22:24;23:5, 13,17;24:17,17;25:4, 6;26:23;32:4,10;33:6, 7;34:16;35:19;38:13; 39:18;40:8;44:22; 46:10;47:13,14,25; 53:7,18;54:16;59:14; 60:3,21;61:1,21,23, 25;62:13;65:13; 68:12;78:9;81:12,12 Lakes (15) 5:2,22;9:6,9,17; 13:11,24;14:4;17:3; 18:9;35:3,14;60:15, 17,22 land (8) 33:15;37:19;39:3; 47:20;49:7;55:24,25; 71:18 landfill (2) 61:2;71:14 landowners (3) 50:4,6,10 lands (1) 79:4 LaPorte (2) 76:13;77:11 large (7) 11:8;15:25;17:13; 44:19;77:3,20;78:3 larger (1) 12:25 largest (1) 49:12 Larry (4) 47:7;53:9;54:11; 56:10 last (8) 3:25;4:19;8:2;18:9; 27:13;30:13;83:3,15 lastly (2) 52:22;61:21 later (2) 12:8;74:15 laterals (1)			

17:16,16,23,24;25:4; 26:11;27:24;28:10; 59:6;63:15;67:17; 69:1;74:20;79:24; 83:9;87:4,19;88:9	88:15 mailing (1) 58:2 main (4) 14:24;46:17,23; 70:3 maintain (2) 16:8;61:18 maintaining (1) 54:10 major (4) 13:22;45:2;46:5; 53:21 majority (3) 14:8;45:6;49:18 majors (3) 68:23,23;69:12 Maka (3) 32:18,18;56:10 M-a-k-a (1) 32:19 makes (6) 20:10;25:15;36:1; 58:10;59:16;78:17 making (3) 27:14,15;47:7 man (3) 49:20;55:6;75:21 managed (1) 62:6 manager (2) 6:15;83:24 Manitowoc (1) 80:9 manner (1) 8:20 manpower (1) 51:2 Manteno (3) 14:11,15;67:1 manufactured (1) 43:9 many (24) 26:23;31:4;41:6; 48:6,7,9;49:21;50:7; 57:14;60:1,10;61:8; 65:17,18;66:8;67:7,8; 73:18,21;77:4;78:19; 83:22;87:21,21 map (21) 14:19;17:12,17; 18:10;19:17;25:5; 26:8,8;35:15;49:1; 55:9;59:8,15;61:22; 70:11;73:16,25; 74:20;85:25;86:1; 87:11 maps (9) 3:8;9:9;14:20; 17:12,13,13,15;18:1, 10 March (1) 18:8	mark (3) 19:19;73:15;76:22 marsh (4) 65:14,15,17;66:7 Martin (1) 54:20 Marty (1) 58:5 Mary (1) 38:3 mask (1) 74:6 masses (1) 71:18 master (1) 27:6 material (2) 43:3;82:1 materials (5) 36:3,6;51:1;52:1; 79:5 math (2) 64:25,25 matter (2) 51:14;78:1 Matters (1) 16:18 Matthew (2) 74:5,16 may (13) 11:6;13:12;15:20, 20;30:21,22;39:8; 59:17;61:12,21;66:2; 79:24;81:25 maybe (7) 15:10;30:16;39:5,6, 9;49:24;59:15 McColly (1) 83:25 mean (1) 86:12 meaning (2) 10:13;45:19 meant (1) 49:19 media (1) 59:21 medical (1) 61:10 meet (1) 43:13 meeting (17) 3:4,6;4:2,7,17;5:9; 8:2;18:18,22;19:2,9, 13,18;51:19;54:18; 66:22;80:5 meetings (2) 18:19,22 member (5) 50:14;56:9;71:9,10; 74:12 members (9) 18:20;23:15;32:20;	34:10,12;42:2;63:22, 24;69:1 mention (3) 41:23;70:2;79:10 mentioned (5) 29:24;59:10;78:25; 81:17;82:14 menu (1) 16:19 merging (1) 70:13 merit (1) 63:24 merits (8) 7:4,10;12:15;14:2; 63:4,25;64:1,1 mess (2) 56:10;84:16 met (1) 63:15 metropolitan (1) 13:17 Michael (1) 64:3 Michelle (1) 71:8 Michigan (3) 22:24;32:4;60:21 Michigan's (1) 62:13 microphone (3) 4:3;10:19;19:5 middle (11) 16:17;35:15,16; 37:2,18,22;41:5;47:1; 51:9;79:24;80:4 might (14) 8:12;11:7,10,12,14, 16,20;18:5,8,14; 29:14;36:13;40:9; 72:11 migratory (1) 39:3 Mildred (1) 33:11 mile (14) 35:19;39:6;44:3,4, 4;45:6;54:24;58:10; 66:19;73:18;78:8; 84:4;86:11,13 miles (9) 14:6;38:5;43:4; 48:2;61:8;73:17; 74:24;80:21;81:6 million (4) 27:13;46:2;58:25; 70:9 millions (1) 52:17 Milton (1) 14:25 mind (2) 8:12;59:11	minimize (1) 49:8 minute (1) 36:24 minutes (15) 3:25;4:19;19:15; 20:14,15,16,19;21:2; 39:12;64:20,21,21,25; 74:15,19 missed (3) 10:12;20:3;66:21 mission (1) 70:22 mistake (3) 59:14,15,19 mistakes (1) 59:17 mitigate (3) 8:19;10:4;47:17 mitigation (6) 8:17;10:3;12:3,5, 10;61:3 modeling (4) 9:23,24;10:2;11:15 modified (1) 31:8 mom (1) 38:6 Momence (1) 42:23 money (9) 28:15,17;42:14; 43:17;76:15,20; 87:20;88:6,6 monitoring (1) 70:3 Monon (2) 52:2;87:25 Montgomery (1) 86:5 month (4) 18:9;34:18;45:19; 79:23 monthly (1) 61:19 months (2) 25:20;31:24 more (25) 3:7;4:7;13:17;21:1, 1;22:9;30:18;32:1; 38:21;40:13,17; 42:15;48:5;54:11; 56:3;59:5,9;61:17; 63:10;66:11;69:22; 70:10;71:21;81:9; 88:18 morning (2) 8:2;61:23 mosquitos (1) 22:19 most (13) 13:12;15:25;21:3; 24:23;32:24;45:8;
M				
magnified (1) 33:19 magnify (1) 33:17 mail (2) 16:4,5 mailed (1)				

49:2,25;51:4;60:18; 80:10;81:2;86:9 mostly (2) 14:7;80:15 mother (1) 39:2 mouth (2) 74:9,10 move (7) 19:16;64:18;70:10, 16;86:19,23;87:2 moved (2) 72:12;86:10 moves (1) 64:19 moving (4) 3:24;4:12;21:18; 79:18 much (12) 32:13;40:22;53:5; 56:2;62:18;65:8; 76:15;80:25;83:14; 87:22;88:8,21 muck (1) 66:13 multiple (2) 69:21;84:1 museum (1) 65:24 mushy (1) 72:12 Mussman (2) 42:10,10 M-u-s-s-m-a-n (1) 42:10 must (9) 6:25;36:24;51:15; 62:25;63:2,6,10,11; 75:7 MYERS (4) 41:8,8;50:24;51:24 M-y-e-r-s (1) 41:8 myself (5) 3:13;6:3;26:8;50:1; 53:12	18:11 National (3) 46:18;68:19;80:18 nation's (1) 67:21 nationwide (1) 81:21 Native (1) 65:18 natural (4) 44:20;55:1,2;71:2 nature (1) 8:15 Navecky (6) 3:1,1,13;4:25;5:3,4 navigate (1) 38:18 near (10) 14:15,25;22:1; 36:12;39:10;46:7; 58:22;59:11;70:4; 82:7 necessarily (1) 87:17 necessary (3) 30:22,23;51:3 necessity (2) 75:10,14 need (30) 5:21;7:18,24;8:5; 9:8;11:4;12:18,20,22, 24;13:3,5;25:8;26:6; 28:3;29:7;30:8,24; 31:8;39:21;40:4;54:3; 56:4;75:5;79:4;85:12, 22;87:16,19,25 needed (2) 11:20;40:25 needing (1) 13:1 needs (13) 22:6;30:2,4;31:25; 37:22;43:19;50:18; 63:4;78:21;79:19; 82:11;83:14;84:20 negate (1) 54:15 negated (1) 53:21 negates (1) 37:9 negative (3) 29:2;41:6;70:19 negatively (4) 36:23;52:13,19,24 negatives (1) 60:6 negotiate (1) 58:12 neighboring (1) 36:9 neighbors (4) 18:20;26:10;48:23;	56:23 neither (1) 24:2 nephew (2) 74:3,5 nervous (1) 26:15 network (3) 13:17,19,21 new (16) 6:24;7:1;11:14,15, 19;19:8;23:15;31:8; 43:8,8;46:1;49:6; 58:17;63:19;64:18; 81:12 Newton (1) 26:10 next (23) 4:5;5:16;6:18;7:14; 9:3,19,19;10:21;12:8, 18;13:3;14:3,19;15:2; 17:6;24:15;31:1,7; 43:1;55:18;71:25; 73:10;83:23 nice (1) 42:8 Niemeyer (5) 24:14;26:20,20; 52:11,22 N-i-e-m-e-y-e-r (1) 26:21 night (4) 8:2;33:18;34:13; 35:11 night's (2) 39:11,13 nine (2) 41:10;61:8 NIPSCO (1) 44:22 NIRO (3) 68:16,17,19 nobody (1) 39:12 noise (8) 10:1;22:3;35:22; 36:15;37:16;39:25; 40:5;45:24 none (1) 32:14 noose (1) 60:2 Norfolk (1) 76:15 north (26) 14:22,24;22:18; 27:19,21;38:5;41:13; 42:5,6,9;43:22;44:6; 45:16;46:7;48:23; 52:9;65:7;73:18; 74:24;75:24;76:3,4; 77:19;78:8;79:13; 81:2	northeast (4) 55:12,12;58:8;66:3 Northwest (12) 14:8,13;33:6;35:1; 55:23;66:1;68:8,17; 69:17;70:13,23;71:3 Northwestern (2) 14:12,21 notes (1) 68:1 notice (2) 29:24;55:6 noticed (1) 55:9 notification (1) 10:8 notified (3) 10:8;11:22;51:20 NS (1) 81:17 number (11) 16:4,23,24,25; 32:20;61:12,16; 67:17;78:10;79:13; 80:22 numbered (1) 86:2 numerous (4) 34:1;49:16;56:24; 69:24 nurse (1) 74:8 nursing (1) 84:22	4:14;7:7;14:23; 19:5;23:2;36:18; 37:13;61:22;68:1; 73:4;75:3;85:16 offer (1) 60:11 offers (1) 69:20 Office (8) 5:1,5;6:6,12;11:24; 24:24;25:20;84:14 officer (2) 24:5;53:7 officers (1) 31:6 official (3) 23:20;28:5;29:3 officials (4) 21:15;29:11;30:10, 12 offset (1) 37:5 often (1) 36:7 Ohio (1) 66:3 oil (2) 42:19;83:1 old (3) 46:1;49:25;73:19 once (6) 4:19,21;5:13;17:20; 81:10;86:11 one (60) 3:18;7:4,9;8:2,2; 15:6,13;16:15;17:12; 18:18;19:17;23:5,25; 24:10;25:5,15;26:25; 30:13;31:2,15,17,23; 41:19;42:2;44:1;45:5; 47:23;48:4,7;49:21; 53:13;55:19;56:18; 57:9;58:10;64:24; 66:11;70:2;71:17; 73:18,20,21;74:21,21; 77:25,25;78:25; 79:10,14;80:24;81:4, 25;82:16;83:20,21; 84:5,7;85:9,11;86:8 one's (1) 73:5 one-year (1) 41:15 online (7) 10:9;18:17,22,25; 19:9;75:16;80:1 only (22) 6:11,11;24:9;25:15; 33:17,23;37:11;44:7, 10,13,23;47:6;53:25; 61:6;63:17,20;65:23, 25;71:1;75:3;83:11; 86:21
N			O	
name (31) 3:1,18;5:3;6:17; 15:19;19:20;20:7,8, 13;23:16;24:16; 31:10;32:18;38:3; 45:14;54:20;56:21; 58:1;60:4;62:10; 66:17;69:15;71:8; 72:21;73:15;75:18; 78:7;80:4;81:1;83:18; 87:14 named (1) 60:15 narrative (1)			Oak (1) 35:20 object (1) 32:25 objections (2) 38:4;68:10 Observatory (13) 33:11,13,24,25; 34:2;47:8;56:11; 68:15;69:19;70:3,6, 16;78:11 observing (4) 33:13;34:8,14,17 obsidian (1) 65:25 obstructed (1) 79:6 obtain (1) 60:21 obviously (3) 40:4;46:5;82:19 occupy (1) 49:6 occurs (1) 60:22 off (12)	

<p>open (5) 3:7,22;17:22;53:17, 25</p> <p>operate (5) 6:24;7:1;13:10; 14:15;61:18</p> <p>operated (1) 3:5</p> <p>operates (1) 33:10</p> <p>operations (2) 8:6;13:18</p> <p>opinion (1) 25:8</p> <p>opportunity (10) 19:7;20:25;30:5,11, 13,24;31:5;72:3; 75:17;83:17</p> <p>oppose (4) 23:19;60:5,10;62:8</p> <p>opposed (6) 26:18;32:21;50:11; 53:3;56:5,14</p> <p>opposition (5) 35:12;50:15;53:12; 54:16,18</p> <p>option (2) 40:14,17</p> <p>optional (1) 73:11</p> <p>options (2) 16:4;32:6</p> <p>oral (5) 4:1,20,22;88:12,13</p> <p>orally (1) 21:10</p> <p>orbits (1) 70:5</p> <p>order (4) 11:15,18;34:24; 70:23</p> <p>ordinance (1) 25:22</p> <p>organic (1) 67:2</p> <p>organization (3) 20:12,13;33:5</p> <p>organizations (2) 34:2,22</p> <p>original (2) 46:25;47:1</p> <p>origins (1) 53:11</p> <p>others (5) 6:16;13:1;30:22; 48:7,16</p> <p>ours (3) 49:17;85:3,3</p> <p>ourselves (2) 6:13,20</p> <p>out (55) 7:17,23;10:16;11:3, 17;17:8,13;18:16;</p>	<p>19:21;21:8;23:14; 24:14;25:6;26:5,14, 25;27:14;28:12,16; 36:16;41:22;42:23; 44:23;45:7;48:3;53:4; 54:2;59:1;60:1,7; 62:4;64:2,13,15,15; 65:1;66:6;68:14; 69:13;71:12,15;72:2; 74:9,10,13,16,16,23; 76:1;78:10;80:13; 82:2;84:3;85:18,19</p> <p>outcome (1) 7:9</p> <p>outgoing (2) 16:25,25</p> <p>outlet (1) 67:5</p> <p>outline (1) 9:2</p> <p>outside (3) 41:16;58:18,22</p> <p>over (41) 3:21;5:23;6:22; 8:12,13;9:2;12:25; 21:20;27:13;28:2; 44:14;46:2;48:16; 50:7;54:23,25,25; 55:2;58:20;59:7,12; 60:12;61:8;64:10,21; 69:21;70:8;73:6,17; 74:4,19,24;76:10; 77:21,22;78:19;79:2, 3;86:4,11;87:23</p> <p>Overall (1) 41:2</p> <p>overpass (2) 64:10;77:23</p> <p>overpasses (1) 79:2</p> <p>overview (2) 5:18;6:18</p> <p>own (6) 43:10,11;44:25; 57:1;68:10;83:2</p> <p>owners (1) 55:15</p> <p>owns (1) 55:6</p>	<p>P</p> <p>Pacific (1) 82:22</p> <p>page (8) 11:8,12;14:3;15:6; 16:1;17:12,15;18:6</p> <p>paid (1) 81:11</p> <p>panel (1) 12:7</p> <p>panels (1) 37:5</p> <p>paper (1) 31:22</p> <p>paragraphs (1) 53:13</p> <p>parallel (1) 55:10</p> <p>paramedics (3) 61:6,7;74:12</p> <p>pardon (1) 42:6</p> <p>parents (1) 22:8</p> <p>parish (1) 52:10</p> <p>Park (7) 33:2;46:15;53:14, 22,24;54:10,18</p> <p>parking (1) 34:9</p> <p>Parks (10) 33:6,7;34:17;46:11; 47:13;53:7;54:16; 62:1;68:13;73:2</p> <p>part (4) 4:18;27:22;47:10; 66:3</p> <p>partially (1) 72:24</p> <p>participate (3) 15:5;19:7,9</p> <p>particular (1) 46:11</p> <p>particularly (1) 37:21</p> <p>parts (2) 4:18;61:8</p> <p>pass (4) 54:19;69:2;70:4; 79:2</p> <p>passed (1) 49:25</p> <p>passenger (1) 81:6</p> <p>passes (1) 61:25</p> <p>passing (1) 33:23</p> <p>passionately (1) 53:10</p> <p>past (4) 31:18;59:12;61:1; 67:13</p> <p>Pastor (3) 45:14,14,15</p> <p>path (1) 58:7</p> <p>paths (1) 7:3</p> <p>pathway (1) 79:13</p> <p>patio (1) 34:8</p> <p>Patricia (1)</p>	<p>42:10</p> <p>Patton (11) 22:1;31:22;39:16, 16,17;43:10;49:20; 55:6;82:18;83:21; 88:3</p> <p>P-a-t-t-o-n (1) 39:17</p> <p>Patton's (1) 87:20</p> <p>pause (1) 59:23</p> <p>pay (2) 23:4;81:13</p> <p>payers (1) 61:19</p> <p>paying (1) 24:11</p> <p>PDF (1) 16:2</p> <p>peacefulness (1) 45:13</p> <p>people (47) 6:11,11;19:7;20:7, 23;21:5,12,16;23:9; 28:23;29:17,25;30:9; 31:13;32:11,24; 37:13;41:23;42:3,6, 15;45:6,20,21;46:6; 63:25;67:3,23;71:11; 75:20,23;76:6,18,20, 25;77:2,2,10;78:3,9; 80:5;81:20,23;84:4,9, 10,19</p> <p>people's (3) 16:14;83:7,7</p> <p>per (2) 8:4;37:15</p> <p>percent (4) 56:14,19;61:24; 85:1</p> <p>perhaps (2) 17:12;59:19</p> <p>period (5) 4:20;10:18;32:16; 79:23;88:17</p> <p>permit (1) 23:10</p> <p>permits (1) 21:5</p> <p>person (12) 18:19;19:4,5,5; 21:17;25:13;31:15, 16,17;38:25;66:18; 83:15</p> <p>personal (3) 60:7;68:10;88:5</p> <p>personally (4) 53:3;71:12;72:18; 83:11</p> <p>perspective (1) 11:3</p> <p>pertaining (1)</p>	<p>75:6</p> <p>pester (1) 4:5</p> <p>Phillis (5) 3:14;6:4,6;21:13; 88:19</p> <p>phone (1) 19:17</p> <p>phones (1) 4:15</p> <p>physics (5) 68:22,22,23;69:12, 24</p> <p>pick (1) 41:19</p> <p>picked (1) 41:15</p> <p>pictures (1) 16:3</p> <p>piece (3) 65:25;72:14;80:7</p> <p>pier (2) 34:6;69:6</p> <p>piers (1) 33:19</p> <p>PINKERTON (2) 85:23,24</p> <p>P-i-n-k-e-r-t-o-n (1) 85:24</p> <p>pipeline (1) 80:11</p> <p>pipelines (1) 62:24</p> <p>pits (1) 79:4</p> <p>pivot (1) 48:11</p> <p>place (1) 48:17</p> <p>placed (1) 48:12</p> <p>places (5) 43:20;46:18;86:8,8, 13</p> <p>plain (2) 25:6;65:12</p> <p>plains (1) 25:5</p> <p>plan (9) 23:22,25;27:5,6; 29:18;42:1;55:17; 62:23;73:21</p> <p>planned (1) 50:3</p> <p>planning (4) 23:22;26:24;27:2; 61:22</p> <p>plans (2) 43:11;59:18</p> <p>plant (3) 41:14;49:4;78:14</p> <p>planters (1) 49:3</p>
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<p>plants (2) 22:21;39:4</p> <p>play (2) 36:14,16</p> <p>played (1) 86:6</p> <p>playground (1) 46:4</p> <p>playing (1) 36:20</p> <p>pleasant (1) 39:10</p> <p>please (18) 4:10,14;5:16;6:18; 7:14;9:19;13:3;14:3, 19;15:2;17:6;20:7,22; 30:13;50:10;72:19, 20;88:13</p> <p>plenty (2) 65:7;81:3</p> <p>plow (1) 83:7</p> <p>plus (1) 43:3</p> <p>pm (1) 88:22</p> <p>point (5) 18:16;21:8;29:13; 49:4;70:8</p> <p>pointed (2) 24:13;78:10</p> <p>pointing (1) 62:4</p> <p>points (6) 59:23;78:11;83:20; 86:4,15;87:10</p> <p>poles (1) 44:19</p> <p>police (2) 22:13;24:5</p> <p>policy (2) 29:21,23</p> <p>politicians (1) 75:22</p> <p>poll (1) 24:23</p> <p>pond (1) 39:4</p> <p>pool (4) 74:6,9,11,16</p> <p>poorly (1) 62:17</p> <p>population (1) 13:23</p> <p>Porter (5) 21:22,24;23:13; 60:3;77:10</p> <p>portion (6) 4:1,7;19:13,18; 36:18;65:11</p> <p>portions (1) 35:17</p> <p>pose (1) 50:21</p>	<p>poses (2) 51:24;52:7</p> <p>positive (1) 52:25</p> <p>positives (1) 60:7</p> <p>possibility (2) 28:18;35:25</p> <p>possible (7) 33:1;48:13;56:16; 63:9,11,25;70:5</p> <p>possibly (3) 58:13;79:19;86:14</p> <p>postcards (2) 85:8,12</p> <p>posted (1) 79:25</p> <p>poster (1) 3:10</p> <p>posting (1) 80:1</p> <p>potatoes (1) 54:2</p> <p>potential (11) 7:5,10;8:3,17;10:4; 13:22;30:3;37:15; 40:18;50:21;63:2</p> <p>potentially (1) 36:18</p> <p>pounds (1) 80:16</p> <p>Powell (1) 52:15</p> <p>power (4) 27:24;28:2;44:21; 85:16</p> <p>practice (1) 57:16</p> <p>practitioner (1) 74:8</p> <p>Prairie (3) 35:19;39:18;40:8</p> <p>precious (1) 47:13</p> <p>preferred (4) 11:25;12:5,9;63:17</p> <p>preliminary (1) 10:3</p> <p>prepare (4) 6:10;9:20;41:4; 68:24</p> <p>prepared (2) 85:10,13</p> <p>preparing (1) 6:14</p> <p>Presbyterian (2) 45:16;57:11</p> <p>present (2) 30:1,5</p> <p>presentation (6) 3:23;4:19,21,22; 18:25;19:12</p>	<p>Presently (1) 33:10</p> <p>preservation (1) 53:16</p> <p>preserve (2) 53:25;54:3</p> <p>preserves (1) 53:25</p> <p>preserving (1) 54:10</p> <p>President (7) 21:21;24:25;31:12, 12;51:18;64:5,6</p> <p>pretty (2) 45:24;77:20</p> <p>prevent (1) 36:15</p> <p>previous (2) 65:17;79:16</p> <p>previously (3) 65:14;83:24;84:1</p> <p>prime (1) 48:3</p> <p>principal (1) 39:18</p> <p>principals (1) 52:7</p> <p>printed (1) 61:22</p> <p>private (7) 27:25;28:8,15,17; 54:7;60:15;83:13</p> <p>privilege (1) 75:11</p> <p>probably (5) 9:25;12:8;25:1,13; 26:4</p> <p>problem (9) 28:11;46:5;55:1; 59:4;75:1;77:12; 78:17;85:2,5</p> <p>problematic (3) 36:2;37:3,14</p> <p>problems (9) 24:7;25:2;26:14; 27:16;28:14;48:22; 60:1;73:21;77:8</p> <p>process (21) 3:11,18,20,23;5:20; 6:19;7:8,15;16:9; 17:5,7,9;20:3;21:18; 30:9;37:8;38:16; 51:15;59:25;62:17; 72:6</p> <p>produce (1) 42:14</p> <p>product (1) 42:15</p> <p>production (2) 48:3;58:25</p> <p>products (1) 57:20</p> <p>Professor (1) 47:8</p>	<p>program (3) 17:19;84:19,23</p> <p>programs (3) 34:21,25;35:2</p> <p>project (56) 3:9,20;4:4;5:1,5,7, 7,25;6:1,15;7:5,6; 9:10;12:4,15,19,21; 13:5,13,20;15:5,6,16; 16:12,16,22,23;17:8; 18:12;23:19,21;24:4, 11,22;25:12;30:16, 17;38:2;39:14;42:4, 16;44:2;49:21;53:12; 59:17;60:2;62:17; 67:16,21;71:6;75:7, 13,16;81:14;82:14,15</p> <p>projects (2) 69:25;70:3</p> <p>promise (1) 10:16</p> <p>promote (2) 76:21;84:18</p> <p>proper (2) 11:12;27:15</p> <p>properly (2) 27:20;51:3</p> <p>properties (3) 72:16;83:12;84:10</p> <p>property (9) 17:24;28:20;36:18; 37:2;39:6;55:15; 73:19;83:8;85:4</p> <p>proposal (5) 21:23;30:6;31:2; 39:1;56:8</p> <p>propose (1) 14:14</p> <p>proposed (52) 5:10,21,22;7:13; 8:11;9:6,17;12:17; 13:15;14:3,19;15:15; 17:25;18:2,3;23:18; 26:8;33:1,14;36:11, 21;37:1,9;38:5;41:13; 44:3;45:10,17;48:5; 49:1,18;50:16;58:7; 59:5;60:6,18,20,24; 61:2,5,13,15,24; 64:23;65:13;66:25; 67:7;68:10;70:11; 75:1;79:13,17</p> <p>proposing (2) 13:7;14:5</p> <p>protect (1) 47:13</p> <p>protecting (1) 27:4</p> <p>protection (2) 41:12;42:1</p> <p>proven (1) 60:25</p>	<p>provide (18) 4:3;10:11,19;13:14, 15,20;14:16;15:2,20, 21;16:1;19:6;43:15; 67:5,6;70:22,24;71:4</p> <p>provided (4) 13:12;15:7;18:9,11</p> <p>provides (2) 34:20;42:22</p> <p>providing (2) 16:11;34:25</p> <p>provoking (1) 37:25</p> <p>proximity (7) 35:5,13,21;36:1,17; 50:19;51:8</p> <p>public (12) 5:9;18:19;29:21,23; 30:12;34:17;46:21; 51:20;56:11;63:23; 75:9,13</p> <p>published (1) 69:25</p> <p>pulled (1) 74:9</p> <p>pumping (1) 58:25</p> <p>Purdue (11) 33:6;54:12;65:20, 25;66:1;68:8,16,21; 69:16;70:12;84:22</p> <p>Purdue's (1) 47:9</p> <p>purpose (7) 5:20;13:3,4,13; 46:21;63:4;65:6</p> <p>purposes (2) 47:10,12</p> <p>push (3) 26:9;29:15;38:10</p> <p>pushing (1) 27:19</p> <p>put (13) 16:18;19:19,21,24; 55:25;58:21;65:6,23; 69:8;72:2,19;74:6; 75:15</p> <p>puts (2) 80:11;88:3</p> <p>putting (4) 18:7;25:15;69:18; 71:24</p>
Q				
				<p>qualities (1) 53:19</p> <p>Quality (7) 23:11;35:22;36:24; 38:13;53:20;71:4; 79:6</p> <p>quarry (11) 55:3,4,6,7,11;58:17,</p>

17,22;59:1,11;71:13 quarter (5) 44:4,4;70:9;78:8; 86:11 Quebec (1) 43:5 quick (2) 85:6;86:20 quickly (1) 26:2 quiet (3) 37:16;42:8;45:12 quite (4) 10:13;25:18;37:20; 87:8 quote (2) 49:6,20	64:9;67:13;76:1; 87:21;88:1 railroad's (1) 49:9 rails (7) 35:14;36:1,3;38:18; 52:10;66:14;79:2 railway (14) 60:11,16,20,24; 61:5,13,15,16;62:9; 72:5,18;79:3,9,17 raise (5) 6:6;19:22,25;20:1; 72:24 raised (1) 54:22 ramps (1) 79:5 Range (2) 45:15;57:11 rat (1) 81:3 rate (1) 61:19 reach (2) 58:11;61:9 read (8) 32:24;48:5;49:20, 22;53:13;68:2;82:15; 83:22 readily (1) 80:2 reading (2) 4:21;18:15 real (10) 49:17;68:2,3;83:19, 21;85:6;86:20,23; 87:2,8 realize (2) 60:2;63:20 really (9) 16:23;17:23,23; 37:14;49:19;56:4; 67:22;70:17;88:12 reaping (1) 24:10 reason (2) 59:13;74:18 reasonable (1) 45:8 reasons (3) 23:20;39:14;60:10 receive (1) 48:24 received (3) 23:22;26:2;85:9 recently (1) 78:19 recession (1) 84:6 recessions (2) 84:5,7 recognizes (1)	50:5 recommend (3) 12:2;21:2;42:2 recommendations (2) 12:6,9 reconsider (1) 35:4 record (5) 12:11;24:21;26:18; 75:10;85:22 Recreation (3) 53:8;54:17;62:1 recruit (1) 70:21 recycling (1) 84:17 red (3) 26:15,16;67:25 redone (1) 27:18 reduce (1) 37:7 refer (2) 6:20;33:4 referred (1) 7:15 regard (2) 29:23;66:10 regarding (2) 35:21;51:13 regards (1) 51:9 region (5) 13:16;35:2;70:17, 25;71:3 regional (1) 13:21 register (2) 19:1;46:18 registered (1) 19:6 regular (2) 15:7;16:5 regularly (1) 34:19 regulate (1) 43:12 regulations (1) 38:16 reiterate (1) 88:17 related (3) 12:23;18:6;69:18 relation (2) 39:17;86:16 remained (1) 46:20 remediation (2) 79:15,19 Remember (1) 50:12 remind (2) 20:21;62:13	render (2) 33:24;69:10 Rengstorf (5) 47:9;68:7,7;69:17; 70:2 R-e-n-g-s-t-o-r-f (1) 68:8 reorganize (1) 27:22 rep (1) 26:23 repair (1) 14:17 replace (1) 57:6 replica (1) 46:25 reply (1) 11:5 reporter (1) 20:5 represent (6) 23:17;46:6;66:23; 67:15;68:3,3 representing (1) 27:12 represents (3) 31:12;34:1;47:6 request (6) 7:1,13;10:10;63:23; 75:8,14 requesting (2) 17:4;51:12 requests (1) 13:9 require (5) 9:21;11:6,14,16; 61:14 required (1) 8:19 requirement (1) 63:15 requirements (2) 25:22,24 re-rail (2) 80:8,21 re-railing (1) 80:6 re-rails (1) 80:25 rerouted (1) 22:8 Rerouting (1) 40:13 research (6) 53:15;68:16,20,23; 69:11,12 resident (2) 39:19;87:15 residential (1) 62:5 residents (8) 24:1;47:14;49:9;	61:1;70:23;71:5; 75:12;78:13 resolution (3) 21:23;35:11;54:17 resources (5) 5:24;15:4,13;16:3; 47:13 respect (1) 31:20 respectful (1) 20:22 respectively (1) 63:22 respond (2) 13:8;51:3 responder (1) 64:7 response (4) 11:11;44:25;60:13; 61:6 responses (1) 80:1 responsibility (2) 41:3;78:4 responsible (2) 48:19;72:8 rest (3) 21:4;59:17;69:14 restraint (1) 31:20 result (1) 36:17 resulting (2) 24:6;61:18 retired (1) 24:5 return (1) 34:15 Reverend (1) 57:12 reverse (1) 87:4 review (12) 3:11,24;6:13;7:3,8, 15;8:6;10:9;14:2; 42:3;63:24;67:22 reviewed (1) 9:16 reviewing (1) 7:1 reviews (1) 7:9 reworking (1) 61:14 rich (1) 66:7 richest (1) 67:21 Rick (4) 24:14;26:20;30:15; 52:22 ride (1) 36:22
R				
race (1) 81:3 Rachael (1) 66:17 radius (1) 31:13 rail (71) 5:7,10,21;6:24;7:1, 13;8:11,18,18;9:5,10, 13,16;12:17;13:7,15, 17,18,19,21,22;14:5, 12,15,18,20;18:14; 23:18;24:2;28:1; 30:16;31:17;35:12, 15;36:1;37:9,10; 38:22;42:16,18; 43:10,16;44:3,5;45:4, 9,17,17;50:16,17,19, 21;52:16;58:10,12; 60:6;65:13;68:10; 69:2,19;70:6,14,18; 71:1;73:6;75:1,5; 78:8;79:13;82:25; 86:9 railcars (1) 43:2 railroad (50) 6:22,23;13:16;22:9; 25:8;28:19;31:22; 32:2;33:1,14;38:5,7; 39:5,10;40:22;41:6; 44:14,15;45:1,10; 46:13;48:1,6,14,20; 49:5,6,18,23;53:21; 54:14,23;55:25; 62:23;63:8,19;65:4,6; 75:23,24;76:6,14,16; 77:6,12,21;81:15; 85:10;87:23,25 railroading (1) 82:19 railroads (8) 13:14,16;63:14;				

rides (1) 71:21	73:10;74:21,21,23; 77:9,15;86:3,23,25	scares (1) 77:5	seats (1) 4:13	64:23;73:13
ridiculous (1) 84:15	routes (11) 8:11;9:11,15;38:1; 40:7,16,17;63:11,18; 71:24;73:11	scattered (1) 6:16	second (5) 21:17;30:8;61:5; 64:5;73:24	settled (1) 49:8
right (37) 4:9;15:18;19:23,25; 20:3,16;21:17;22:2; 25:11;26:5,12,25; 27:15;30:10;39:18; 40:13;55:10,18; 59:10,13;63:5;71:25; 72:25;73:3,6;74:11; 75:11,11;82:24; 83:13,23;84:3;86:6, 17,18;88:9,16	routinely (2) 45:3;69:21	schedule (1) 54:23	Secondly (1) 87:4	settlement (1) 47:3
rightly (1) 62:4	routing (2) 61:5,13	scheduled (1) 51:19	seconds (1) 20:18	seven (3) 6:16;27:13;81:5
right-of-way (5) 18:2;21:25;28:4; 33:1;62:20	row (2) 44:18;49:3	Scheub (6) 21:19,21,21;25:1; 26:4;52:12	section (2) 14:10;75:4	several (8) 34:9;36:8;45:12; 52:9;71:19;78:9,23; 79:1
ring (1) 41:18	rule (1) 76:23	S-c-h-e-u-b (1) 21:21	sections (2) 18:13;69:21	severe (2) 24:8;43:15
rises (1) 65:18	run (18) 3:3;25:8;35:17; 36:13;37:12;46:14; 55:1,10,21,23;65:7, 13;77:6;81:5,19; 82:21;83:2,3	Schneider (4) 29:15;40:8;75:25; 81:18	secured (1) 78:20	severely (1) 45:10
risk (1) 40:22	running (5) 36:14;55:16;75:24; 77:25;82:23	school (37) 18:4;21:24;22:8; 24:7;35:3,9,10,15,17, 19,20;36:1,12;37:2, 18,22;38:18;39:22; 40:12,14,20,21;41:5; 44:13,13;46:24;47:4; 49:12,14,16;51:9; 71:9,17;72:1,4;73:19; 84:21	seem (2) 63:15,18	shallow (1) 66:12
River (8) 22:20;42:21,21,23; 55:11;59:2;76:17; 77:16	runs (2) 35:18;70:14	schools (13) 22:7,11;28:22; 34:21;35:21;52:7,8; 57:7,8,24;71:25;77:6; 84:18	seems (3) 59:7,14;71:14	shaped (1) 49:2
rivers (1) 12:25	Rural (6) 44:24;45:8,13; 61:10;67:4;83:5	S	selected (1) 63:17	share (1) 73:1
road (21) 24:6;44:4,6,18,19, 22;45:4;55:19;58:4,7, 15;66:20;72:5;73:6,7, 25;74:1;79:2,3;86:9; 87:22	safe (5) 38:17;40:21;41:4; 42:8;82:9	SCHULTZ (2) 75:18,19	sells (1) 28:20	Shelby (2) 29:15;32:10
roads (6) 34:8;36:21;37:12; 44:5;45:9;83:7	safety (14) 35:22,24;36:19; 38:21;40:20;42:13; 46:3;49:16;51:10; 52:8;58:14;59:11; 71:22;77:8	S-c-h-u-l-t-z (1) 75:20	semi (1) 78:2	shells (1) 66:7
roaming (1) 3:14	Salatas (3) 51:17,17;64:5	Science (1) 68:19	Senate (2) 26:21,22	shooting (1) 64:12
Robertson (2) 56:6,6	S-a-l-a-t-a-s (1) 51:17	scientific (1) 53:15	Senator (2) 24:14;52:11	Shore (2) 81:6,8
R-o-b-e-r-t-s-o-n (1) 56:7	same (8) 18:25;24:9;26:6; 32:12;45:6;55:7; 70:10;85:25	Scientists (1) 68:18	send (2) 85:18,19	short (1) 29:25
Robotic (1) 68:17	sand (1) 65:17	scope (5) 7:17;8:25;9:3,21; 62:17	sensitive (1) 33:16	shoulder (1) 20:21
Rockford (1) 14:24	Sandy (5) 43:25;46:9;53:10; 54:1,11	scoped (1) 63:2	sent (1) 26:5	show (2) 47:15;56:11
rolled (1) 78:2	Santa (2) 76:2,3	scoping (5) 5:9;7:15;8:10,22; 10:14	separate (1) 22:14	showing (1) 84:3
room (5) 3:9;6:16;32:25; 65:7;76:24	saw (1) 84:6	scouting (1) 34:21	series (1) 65:15	shown (2) 31:21;59:8
route (33) 9:6,17;18:4;23:12; 29:17;37:12;45:17; 46:7;49:16;57:13,15; 59:5,6;60:19;61:24; 62:18;66:2,19,25; 67:7,7,18,23;68:4;	saying (13) 16:13,15;17:3; 24:11,21;25:19; 26:18;39:17;72:6; 76:9;77:7;84:10; 85:12	scrambly (1) 68:2	serious (3) 51:24;52:7;58:13	shows (1) 61:24
		se (1) 8:4	seriously (1) 43:20	shut (1) 41:20
		search (2) 16:21,24	serve (1) 61:7	side (12) 14:23;22:18;27:21, 21;43;22,23;66:21; 73:4,7;80:11;82:16; 86:2
		searchable (1) 80:2	served (1) 26:23	side-by-side (1) 14:9
		seat (1) 21:17	serves (1) 65:6	sides (1) 42:18
			service (1) 81:6	sidewalks (1) 34:8
			services (17) 24:7,9;28:25;32:8; 44:21;45:11,22;46:1; 58:11;61:9;73:22; 74:12,23;75:2,3,12; 76:20	signed (2) 10:7;21:23
			servicing (2) 14:16;70:20	significant (1) 51:6
			sessions (1) 34:17	similar (2) 18:18,24
			set (5) 6:1;33:19;45:23;	simulations (1) 10:1
				single (2)

<p>14:6;48:16 Singleton (3) 26:15,17;59:1 sister (1) 74:4 sit (3) 46:25;64:21;86:25 site (4) 33:10;54:10;61:11; 65:19 sites (1) 83:6 sits (2) 48:20;64:16 sitting (2) 20:16;31:3 situation (5) 30:22;32:13;51:3,8; 79:20 situations (2) 30:21;37:14 six (4) 13:14;27:13;66:12; 73:17 sixth (1) 39:20 size (1) 49:12 skies (1) 34:14 sky (2) 33:18;56:12 slated (1) 46:14 sleep (2) 39:11,13 slide (10) 5:16;6:18;7:14; 9:19;10:21;13:3; 14:19;15:2;17:6;48:6 slides (1) 19:11 slow (1) 87:8 slump (1) 82:24 small (11) 6:10,21;27:3;44:1; 45:5;66:24,24;67:15; 72:9;75:4;77:2 smallest (1) 80:7 snowstorms (2) 45:2;73:9 social (1) 45:22 Society (9) 32:20;33:4;34:4,12, 20;35:6,7;56:9;68:12 software (1) 17:19 soil (7) 8:13;25:14;66:15;</p>	<p>67:11,12,13,21 soils (2) 8:7;66:13 solar (3) 33:13;37:1,4 soliciting (1) 8:22 Somebody (3) 81:17;82:14;83:5 somebody's (1) 71:15 someone (4) 28:20;29:21;63:5; 64:12 sometime (1) 12:8 sometimes (3) 6:20;48:15;83:9 somewhere (1) 3:14 sons (2) 47:22,22 son's (1) 55:18 soon (1) 41:10 sorry (2) 14:13;78:15 sorts (1) 69:7 souls (1) 36:2 sound (3) 37:20;38:17;72:11 source (4) 32:3;41:21;42:25; 78:12 south (27) 22:17;23:5;25:3,6; 26:9,11;27:1,7,9; 33:1;35:18;38:6,12; 39:2;41:10;43:22; 44:3;47:25;54:24; 58:15;61:1;70:14; 74:25;76:4;77:18; 81:6,8 Southern (6) 14:8,14,25;35:17; 60:3;76:15 south-southwest (1) 58:16 southwest (2) 58:19;79:12 space (3) 5:13;53:17,25 spatted (1) 74:10 speak (22) 19:1,21;20:15,15, 19,24;21:6,7;39:21; 42:11;44:1;46:10; 47:21;50:15,24;53:8; 54:10;57:12,22;</p>	<p>71:10;75:17;88:20 speaker (1) 20:14 speaking (4) 19:4;26:16;32:21; 36:4 Special (4) 22:5;37:22;39:4; 84:20 specialist (1) 40:20 specific (1) 58:6 specifically (5) 35:13;52:14;53:8; 62:16;73:22 specifications (1) 43:13 spectators (1) 36:16 spell (1) 20:8 spelling (1) 66:18 spend (1) 81:5 spent (7) 27:13;48:14,16; 52:13,17;64:8;76:25 spill (3) 22:25;80:24;85:13 spilled (1) 41:18 spills (3) 22:10;35:25;59:3 spoke (2) 58:17;84:15 spoken (2) 62:12;73:5 sprawl (1) 62:2 sprung (1) 32:13 stages (1) 33:12 stand (3) 25:16;29:11;50:10 standing (2) 5:15;71:16 stars (1) 56:12 start (5) 4:11;21:14;35:24; 49:14;56:1 starts (1) 14:21 state (43) 7:22;8:23;11:2; 16:14,15;20:7,12; 23:6,20;24:14;25:19; 26:21,22,23;29:4,8, 22;31:5,6,6;44:4,19, 22;45:4;49:6,12;54:7;</p>	<p>55:19,20;58:4,7,15; 60:9;62:3;65:20,24, 24;66:21;73:6,7;74:1; 75:10;87:6 stated (3) 47:15;67:10;83:21 Statement (7) 5:6,20;9:20;10:6; 11:21;30:5;32:24 Statements (4) 9:1;63:5,7;78:10 States (4) 6:23;9:23;75:7; 84:2 statewide (1) 25:5 static (2) 66:11,15 stating (1) 85:9 station (3) 22:13,13;44:8 stations (1) 48:4 statutes (1) 29:6 stay (2) 43:24;49:19 stayed (1) 72:12 STB (3) 6:21;23:10;75:6 steel (4) 76:15;78:3;80:15, 17 Steelworkers (1) 34:3 step (4) 7:14;9:19;31:7; 51:15 Steve (1) 29:19 S-t-e-v-e (1) 29:19 Steve's (1) 28:6 still (1) 76:17 stone (6) 55:3,4,6,7,11;58:17 stones (1) 37:3 stop (4) 38:2;59:16;73:24; 83:14 stopping (1) 64:16 stops (3) 73:9;74:14;79:14 storage (1) 25:23 store (1) 44:7</p>	<p>story (2) 74:5,18 straight (1) 59:9 Straughen (2) 56:21,21 S-t-r-a-u-g-h-e-n (1) 56:22 Streator (4) 76:2,3,10;81:18 Street (14) 33:9;44:5;45:17; 46:8;58:9;68:15; 72:25;74:21;86:5,5, 18,24;87:1,9 stress (2) 9:8;22:7 stretched (1) 32:10 strived (1) 52:24 Strong (4) 21:19;23:16,16; 69:10 strongest (1) 32:25 stuck (3) 38:25;74:13;77:24 student (3) 35:22,24;36:23 students (17) 22:4;36:9,12,14,15, 19,22;37:6,18,22,22; 69:20,22,24;70:19,20; 71:5 students' (1) 36:8 studies (1) 63:6 study (7) 7:18,25;9:1,3,5,21; 63:21 studying (1) 9:5 stuff (16) 8:3;11:9;28:24,25; 29:2,4;31:21;57:17, 20;82:2,3,4,6,10;86:7, 20 stupid (3) 75:21,23;76:8 subdivision (2) 14:23;36:12 subject (1) 50:24 subjected (1) 33:18 submission (1) 69:8 submit (1) 61:21 submitted (1) 59:20</p>
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<p>submitting (2) 79:11,24</p> <p>substances (1) 50:20</p> <p>suggest (3) 8:10;62:21;66:9</p> <p>suggestions (2) 8:17,20</p> <p>suggests (1) 60:16</p> <p>sum (1) 87:16</p> <p>summer (1) 74:2</p> <p>Summerville (1) 6:15</p> <p>sunburned (1) 26:16</p> <p>Superintendent (3) 35:9;41:9;51:23</p> <p>supply (9) 44:20;50:20,22; 60:25;67:5,6;68:6; 85:15,16</p> <p>support (3) 24:1;29:12;31:16</p> <p>supported (2) 47:16;66:14</p> <p>supporting (1) 29:18</p> <p>supposed (2) 84:18;85:19</p> <p>sure (6) 20:24;21:4;26:6; 27:9,15;70:4</p> <p>Surface (12) 3:2,13;4:25;5:4,18; 6:4,18,19;13:6;22:17; 78:14,15</p> <p>surround (1) 41:2</p> <p>surrounding (2) 43:7;53:22</p> <p>survey (1) 65:19</p> <p>Surveyor (3) 24:17,18;65:11</p> <p>surveys (1) 67:13</p> <p>survived (3) 84:5,7,8</p> <p>Susan (1) 47:19</p> <p>SUSON (2) 69:15,16</p> <p>S-u-s-o-n (1) 69:16</p> <p>sustainability (1) 67:11</p> <p>sustainable (3) 66:24;67:2,20</p> <p>sweatshirt (1) 67:25</p>	<p>swimming (1) 74:5</p> <p>switched (1) 28:12</p> <p>switching (3) 14:16;48:4;62:22</p> <p>system (6) 27:18;48:8,8;53:24; 61:17;78:18</p> <p>systems (1) 23:2</p> <p style="text-align: center;">T</p> <p>table (3) 6:14;20:9;42:2</p> <p>tables (2) 17:14;19:17</p> <p>tags (2) 3:18;6:17</p> <p>talk (14) 21:2,12;28:6;29:11; 30:14;47:9;53:9,10; 54:12;59:20,22; 62:16;64:2;69:19</p> <p>talked (5) 31:18;39:11;47:7; 54:1;69:17</p> <p>talking (11) 28:23;44:12;45:5; 67:19;71:20,22,23,24; 72:15;80:5;83:5</p> <p>tanks (1) 79:16</p> <p>tap (1) 20:20</p> <p>tape (2) 85:13,15</p> <p>targeted (1) 61:25</p> <p>tax (2) 81:11,13</p> <p>taxpayer (1) 54:8</p> <p>taxpayers (2) 24:11;52:19</p> <p>taxpayer's (1) 76:20</p> <p>teach (2) 54:4;68:21</p> <p>teaching (1) 37:6</p> <p>team (1) 6:8</p> <p>technical (2) 11:10;69:18</p> <p>technology (1) 63:12</p> <p>telescope (6) 34:6;68:17,17,19, 20;69:4</p> <p>telescopes (3) 33:16,19,25</p>	<p>telling (2) 64:14;76:7</p> <p>ten (4) 3:11;44:11;64:20; 80:6</p> <p>Tennessee (2) 82:5;84:2</p> <p>tens (1) 34:11</p> <p>term (1) 62:19</p> <p>terminal (1) 14:15</p> <p>terms (1) 32:25</p> <p>testified (1) 51:11</p> <p>thanks (2) 5:15;73:14</p> <p>theirs (1) 83:4</p> <p>thinking (3) 72:2;77:7;82:9</p> <p>third (2) 8:1;61:13</p> <p>Thomas (2) 33:10,25</p> <p>though (2) 77:23;84:9</p> <p>thought (5) 31:16;55:24;59:24; 72:6;81:8</p> <p>thoughts (2) 19:8;30:1</p> <p>thousands (7) 34:11;47:4;48:14; 52:14,17;54:6,9</p> <p>threat (3) 50:21;51:24;52:7</p> <p>three (15) 9:23;20:14,15,16, 19;21:1;25:2;32:9; 38:22;44:14;57:15; 58:10,12;74:20;77:13</p> <p>three-member (1) 12:7</p> <p>three-minute (1) 20:23</p> <p>three-quarters (2) 35:19;66:19</p> <p>throughout (6) 48:17;52:18;65:16; 70:25;80:5;81:22</p> <p>thrown (1) 52:20</p> <p>Thursday (2) 35:11;54:18</p> <p>Tiffany (1) 20:16</p> <p>Tiffany's (1) 19:25</p> <p>tile (3) 8:7;42:14;79:7</p>	<p>tiles (3) 42:17;48:15;65:15</p> <p>timed (3) 64:13,15,15</p> <p>timeframe (1) 3:7</p> <p>times (8) 25:2;44:16,25; 45:12;56:24;57:15; 61:6;71:20</p> <p>tip (1) 58:20</p> <p>tired (3) 71:13;72:19;81:16</p> <p>today (6) 7:7;26:14,17;35:10; 49:3,10</p> <p>today's (1) 3:4</p> <p>told (2) 65:21;66:1</p> <p>toll (2) 72:5;87:22</p> <p>tomorrow (1) 18:24</p> <p>tonight (31) 4:11,17;6:8;18:21, 21,24;19:8,19,20,23; 20:5,24;21:9,15; 28:24;29:11,20;31:3, 25;32:21;42:12,12; 47:21;50:8;56:3; 60:11;62:7;71:12; 75:5,20;76:24</p> <p>tonight's (2) 3:6;4:17</p> <p>took (1) 74:19</p> <p>tool (1) 17:15</p> <p>tools (1) 9:25</p> <p>top (1) 15:12</p> <p>topic (2) 10:12;11:7</p> <p>topics (1) 14:1</p> <p>tornado (1) 44:17</p> <p>total (1) 76:3</p> <p>totally (3) 22:25;57:23;86:18</p> <p>touched (3) 30:15;58:5;65:11</p> <p>tourism (1) 53:20</p> <p>towards (1) 79:17</p> <p>town (32) 22:14;41:8,9,10; 44:7;50:14,17,19;</p>	<p>51:4,7,13,18,19; 52:24,25;55:7;57:2,4, 7;64:4;65:5;72:8,9; 73:2,12,13,14,18; 78:12;83:24;84:18; 88:1</p> <p>towns (1) 82:5</p> <p>town's (1) 8:14</p> <p>township (9) 24:5;27:12;31:12; 45:22;58:3;61:7,8; 66:12;73:23</p> <p>townships (2) 51:5;57:1</p> <p>track (10) 14:9;48:14,20; 55:10;58:18,22;75:4; 81:6,9,17</p> <p>tracks (25) 14:7,10,11;22:14; 35:5;36:7,10,13,17, 20,21;38:23,24; 43:11;44:15;49:16; 58:16;64:23;77:21, 22;82:8,8,22,24;83:23</p> <p>trading (2) 66:5,6</p> <p>traditional (1) 66:18</p> <p>traffic (12) 13:18,22;22:5;42:5; 51:7;64:11;73:10,12, 13,25;74:14,19</p> <p>Trail (1) 52:2</p> <p>trails (1) 67:14</p> <p>train (32) 22:5;33:23;35:5; 36:7,25;37:13;38:19, 23;40:5,18,25;42:5, 13;43:5;52:1,10,21; 53:1,3;55:10;58:21; 59:6;64:11,16,18; 66:14;68:22;78:2,3; 81:7;83:23;84:4</p> <p>training (2) 51:2;70:24</p> <p>trains (22) 36:5;37:2,15;39:12; 42:19;51:6;55:2; 57:21;59:20,22; 64:24;65:6,7;76:4; 77:24;81:3,9,19; 82:21;83:1,2;86:7</p> <p>train's (1) 86:21</p> <p>Transcontinental (1) 76:5</p> <p>transcribed (1) 20:11</p>
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transcribing (1) 20:6	20;81:4	University (4) 33:6;54:12;68:8; 69:16	46:21;47:3;48:4;56:1; 65:18;76:11;77:22; 80:8,9;81:19;82:17	70:8
transferred (1) 22:6	78:7	university's (1) 70:22	useful (1) 17:11	viewable (1) 17:17
transmission (1) 61:17	4:14,15;21:4;42:9; 55:12;71:6;72:4;77:7; 81:18;85:15	unless (2) 75:8;83:23	useless (1) 69:11	views (1) 79:6
transparent (1) 16:8	turning (1) 86:24	unlike (1) 81:2	uses (3) 49:8;62:25;77:4	visit (1) 74:4
transport (2) 43:2;85:19	turns (1) 73:7	unnegated (1) 70:7	using (2) 9:25;43:8	visitors (2) 34:19;47:14
Transportation (19) 3:2,13;4:25;5:4,18; 6:5,19,20;7:4,9;9:7; 12:14;13:7,11;14:2; 35:4,14,23;60:16	TV (2) 75:20,21	unravel (1) 53:1	utilities (1) 61:15	visual (1) 10:1
transported (2) 50:21;85:10	tweaking (1) 29:12	unsafe (1) 23:11	utility (8) 44:11,19;61:16,17, 19,20;62:21,24	voice (4) 29:7;38:4;45:25,25
traps (1) 22:17	two (29) 3:12;4:18;7:3,9; 14:9;15:3;18:23; 21:16;23:15,23; 24:18;25:20;31:14; 32:15;37:11;38:5; 44:6,14,17;47:22; 54:25;57:15;60:11; 76:4,4;77:24;78:7; 83:20;84:22	unusable (1) 33:25	utilize (1) 13:16	voices (1) 32:16
travel (3) 36:12;41:15;57:13	type (6) 10:15;15:23;19:3; 22:12;66:15,15	unusual (2) 65:22,22	utilizing (1) 24:2	volatile (1) 82:2
traveling (1) 60:24	types (2) 25:14;43:3	up (80) 3:19;4:2;6:1,8;25, 25;9:11,15;10:7,19; 12:7;13:1,6;14:14,21, 24;15:11;16:12; 17:22;18:2,13,16; 20:9,16,17,21;21:3,6, 12,16,19,25;26:17; 28:12;34:24;35:16; 37:3;38:17,19;39:9; 41:15,19;42:2,5,6,9; 43:22,24;45:23;48:9, 20;55:23;56:10;57:7, 12;58:24,25;65:7; 67:21;71:16;73:13, 20;74:7,18;75:25; 76:11,12;77:18;81:3, 7,19,20,23;83:20; 85:17;86:19,22;87:2, 16;88:10,16	V	volcanoes (1) 66:1
traverse (1) 44:5	U	update (1) 30:25	vague (3) 62:19,20;63:4	volunteer (6) 32:12;34:1;40:23; 46:11,11;54:9
traversed (1) 45:4	ultimate (1) 62:23	up-north (1) 66:18	vain (1) 52:15	voting (1) 35:11
treated (1) 9:14	under (3) 14:1;25:22;78:15	upon (1) 30:15	valid (1) 63:1	W
treatment (1) 41:14	undergoing (1) 79:15	upper (1) 15:11	value (1) 23:7	wait (8) 36:25;37:13;86:25, 25,25,25;87:1,1
treaty (1) 62:15	undergrad (1) 69:12	upper-level (2) 68:22,23	values (1) 85:4	Waitrock (2) 87:14,14
trees (1) 44:18	undergraduates (1) 70:1	upset (1) 49:20	various (1) 60:10	W-a-i-t-r-o-c-k (1) 87:15
tremendously (1) 22:16	underground (1) 80:12	urban (2) 54:3;62:2	vehicles (3) 45:3;77:22,24	waive (2) 25:22,24
Tri-Creek (4) 35:9,10;49:11;71:9	underneath (1) 52:3	urge (3) 67:16,22;71:6	venture (2) 28:15,15	waived (1) 25:25
tried (6) 5:14;6:13;53:2; 68:1;72:9;88:3	undertaking (1) 31:23	use (15) 16:24;28:13,20; 34:13;43:2;45:21; 47:1,20;62:2,19,19; 65:16;68:20;70:6; 80:12	venue (1) 10:17	walk (1) 36:9
trillion (1) 81:5	unfortunately (1) 52:10	used (14) 33:13;36:4;37:5;	venues (1) 5:13	wants (1) 6:24
triple (1) 14:11	unheard (1) 84:23		verify (1) 63:7	Ward (1) 64:4
truck (6) 44:11;73:11,24; 74:14;79:14;86:19	unincorporated (4) 22:14,23;41:23; 73:3		vibrate (2) 4:15;33:23	Washington (2) 30:12;75:22
trucks (1) 45:3	Union (1) 82:22		vibration (5) 22:3;33:18;35:22; 37:17;41:16	waste (4) 85:8,13,17,20
true (3) 29:6;82:17,17	unique (5) 7:21;25:4;53:14,24; 78:13		vibrationally (1) 69:4	wastes (1) 85:9
trustee (1) 24:6	United (2) 6:23;34:3		vibrations (2) 69:2,9	wasting (2) 76:19,20
trustees (1) 35:10			VICARI (2) 72:21,22	watch (1) 75:20
try (4) 16:8;28:8;32:23; 86:18			V-i-c-a-r-i (1) 72:22	water (46) 22:17,24,25;25:14, 15;26:13;27:19; 28:23,24;32:3,4;41:9, 14,21,22;42:13,19,22, 23,24,24;46:2;48:22, 23;50:20,22;51:23; 56:17;57:5,24;59:1; 60:12,21,25;62:14;
trying (10) 7:16,16,17;28:10, 17;73:14;75:23;76:6,			Vice (1) 64:6	
			vicinity (1) 60:19	
			view (1)	

66:12,15;67:10; 78:12,14,14,16,18,20, 21;85:14 water's (1) 32:6 watershed (5) 22:20;42:21;77:17; 78:17;81:24 way (28) 8:13,14;15:10; 28:13;33:20;44:7,10, 13,23;47:17;48:14; 49:9;54:4;55:5,16; 59:16;60:6,7;65:23; 66:25;67:18;72:8; 73:13;74:25;76:11, 16;82:10;86:2 Webinar (1) 19:3 website (10) 6:1,1;15:7,13; 16:10,12,16;17:8; 49:5;61:23 websites (1) 15:3 Wednesday (1) 18:23 week (4) 25:2;31:18;32:14; 57:16 weeks (4) 18:23;23:23;30:18; 31:14 Welcome (3) 5:9;19:9;21:12 wellbeing (1) 51:10 well-field (2) 41:9,22 well-fields (4) 37:11;50:20,25; 51:25 wellhead (2) 41:12;42:1 wells (12) 8:14;32:3;41:11,16, 19,20,20;52:18; 56:24;57:1,2,4 west (10) 14:23;27:12;39:7; 43:23;44:2,4;56:22; 66:21;76:1;84:16 western (2) 35:16;37:1 Westville (2) 70:14,14 wetland (1) 12:23 wetlands (1) 22:20 what's (3) 5:22;67:10;87:19 wheels (1)	58:20 whenever (1) 34:14 whichever (1) 82:10 whistles (1) 22:3 Whiting (1) 80:13 whole (9) 48:13,17;63:23; 65:12;70:25;71:3; 73:21;82:5;87:24 wholeheartedly (1) 51:23 who's (7) 19:6;23:4;48:18; 57:6;62:11;82:21,23 whose (2) 27:8;44:13 wide (1) 48:2 widened (1) 74:1 wife (1) 74:8 wildlife (2) 22:21;39:5 William (1) 62:10 wind (2) 37:20;82:11 windows (1) 85:15 winter (1) 45:2 Wisconsin (5) 7:21;14:8,14,25,25 wise (2) 11:8;32:11 wish (1) 34:22 within (15) 11:23;32:23;33:24; 35:18;41:14;45:18, 23;58:16;60:17,19; 61:20;65:2;69:2; 70:17;80:21 without (5) 32:13;44:21,25; 57:5;70:17 Wolfe (2) 76:22,22 W-o-l-f-e (1) 76:22 woman (1) 67:25 wonder (1) 59:24 wonderful (3) 40:23;72:23;81:12 woodland (1) 47:3	Word (2) 16:1;31:15 work (27) 11:15,18,20,23; 19:14;24:25;27:15; 28:25;34:1,9;40:20; 53:1;54:15;55:17; 59:4;65:3;66:24;68:4, 24,24;69:17;76:21; 77:19,20;80:19;86:1; 88:4 worked (2) 27:2;81:15 working (4) 33:5;47:23;69:25; 77:1 works (2) 17:9;38:12 worse (3) 22:19;25:15;70:12 worst (2) 84:5,7 worth (2) 21:2;85:14 wrap (1) 34:24 wreck (1) 58:21 write (2) 15:19;17:2 writing (2) 17:2;21:4 written (4) 10:22,23,24;31:22 wwwstbdotgov (1) 15:8	83:15;87:12;88:9 zigzag (1) 86:9 zone (2) 37:16;61:22 zoning (1) 27:6 zoom (1) 17:22	38:6 1916 (1) 46:23 191st (2) 33:8;44:2 1920s (1) 47:2 1977 (1) 46:21
			1	2
			1 (1) 64:4 10 (1) 6:11 10,000 (1) 78:13 100 (1) 61:24 110 (4) 31:23;37:15;59:20; 64:24 110- (1) 80:13 12 (2) 49:3;65:23 12,000 (1) 31:12 120,000-pound (1) 80:14 13 (3) 39:12;44:18;64:24 14 (1) 81:16 15 (5) 3:25;4:19;79:24; 85:1;88:18 15,000 (1) 48:5 150 (1) 6:11 153rd (1) 74:25 1600s (1) 66:6 16146 (1) 66:20 167 (1) 47:17 17 (2) 58:25;73:8 173rd (3) 58:2,9,11 18 (2) 31:24;64:10 1800s (1) 47:1 1849 (1) 46:19 1850s (1) 30:19 185th (1)	2 (18) 37:12;45:17;46:7; 54:22;55:17,19; 57:13,15;58:4,7,15; 73:6,7;74:21,21; 79:12;86:23,25 2,000 (1) 43:3 20 (5) 34:1;39:6;59:22; 74:15,19 200 (4) 33:24;45:18,20; 62:20 2004 (1) 74:1 200-feet (1) 48:2 200-foot (1) 28:4 2012 (1) 43:9 2013 (1) 43:6 205,000 (1) 80:15 20-page (1) 18:14 21 (1) 83:20 21st (1) 49:23 22 (3) 64:7,8;65:2 24 (1) 49:3 24- (1) 41:11 250 (2) 45:20;69:3 26 (1) 56:23 27 (1) 40:2 273-mile (1) 27:25 278 (2) 14:6;48:1 27th (1) 18:23
		Y		
		yard (3) 62:22,24;82:25 yards (3) 58:16,23;83:8 year (10) 12:8,8;22:20;41:19; 46:24;47:4;57:19; 69:22;74:3;81:22 years (26) 7:19;9:3;24:18; 26:23;27:4,13;30:17; 31:23;34:1;44:17; 46:1,24;47:17;49:25; 50:7;52:18;54:21; 56:23;64:7,8,10;65:2; 78:19;80:6;81:16; 87:25 youngsters (1) 36:8		
		Z		
		ZIEMKE (6) 4:9;19:15;24:13;		

3	7			
3,900 (1) 80:9 30 (2) 20:18;71:18 30-inch (1) 55:1 33 (1) 82:16 34 (3) 86:4,15;87:10 35952 (2) 16:24;75:6 35-foot (1) 41:11 35-year (1) 24:5 36 (4) 49:3;86:4,15;87:10	7,000 (1) 48:2 70 (2) 43:4;49:24 70s (1) 84:8 7th (3) 18:8;23:17,18			
4	8			
40 (2) 20:23;45:21 41 (2) 73:6,10 45 (1) 64:21 45-degree (3) 55:17,18,22	8:15 (1) 49:14 8:22 (1) 88:22 80 (2) 34:12;46:14 800 (2) 36:2;37:18			
5				
50 (1) 36:25 501C3 (1) 33:5 55 (4) 44:4,19,22;45:4				
6				
6 (2) 26:21;43:6 6:40 (1) 49:13 600,000-acre (1) 65:14 60s (1) 84:6 60-square-mile (1) 31:13 60-ton (1) 80:8 65 (5) 46:7;54:21,22; 73:10;79:12 6655 (1) 58:2				