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

Pursuant to notice, this matter came on for public meeting at the Community Building Complex of Boone County, 111 West First Street, Belvidere, Illinois, on April 19, 2016 at approximately 10:00 a.m.

PRESENT:

Mr. Dave Navecky, Surface Transportation Board,
Office of Environmental Analysis

Ms. Phillis Johnson-Ball, Surface Transportation
Board, Office of Environmental Analysis

Mr. Alan Summerville, ICF International

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1 MR. GRAVES: Welcome ladies and
2 gentlemen. We are going to get started in just
3 about a minute, so if you could begin to take
4 your seats, turn your cell phones to vibrate or
5 off for courtesy for everyone around you. Thank
6 you.

7 Good morning, and thank you for joining
8 us for this Public Scoping Meeting for the Great
9 Lakes Basin Rail Environmental Impact Statement.
10 This morning's meeting is two sections. The
11 first will be a presentation by Mr. David
12 Navecky with the Surface Transportation Board,
13 and then we'll have following his presentation
14 time for oral comments and when we get to that
15 point, I'll give you some guidance on how to
16 make that process go as smoothly as possible.

17 So at this time, I'd like to introduce
18 and turn the meeting over to Mr. Dave Navecky
19 with the Surface Transportation Board, Office of
20 Environmental Analysis.

21 MR. NAVECKY: Good morning, everyone.
22 Again, I am Dave Navecky with the Surface
23 Transportation Board and our office of
24 Environmental Analysis. I want to thank

1 everyone for coming today. We have a great
2 crowd. As probably most of you know, we didn't
3 initially have a meeting scheduled in this
4 location and your County kind of leaders came to
5 us and said we really need a meeting
6 specifically in Boone County and so we are here
7 today.

8 I know the daytime meeting is
9 inconvenient for many of you folks and I really
10 appreciate you making an effort to come out to
11 meet with us today and hear about our
12 environmental review process, and we are anxious
13 to hear from you folks as well, what you have to
14 say about the proposed project. Next slide,
15 please.

16 We are -- Just a couple introductions
17 other than myself, well, then I'll give an
18 overview of who the Surface Transportation Board
19 is and our environmental review process, we'll
20 then have a discussion about the purpose and use
21 of the proposed project and we'll describe what
22 the Great Lakes Basin Transportation group has
23 proposed, and then we are going to go over
24 some -- a couple websites that are available

1 through us to help you stay informed about our
2 process and the proposed project and how you can
3 participate in our process. Next slide, please.

4 The introductions, again, my name is
5 Dave Navecky. I am leading our agency's efforts
6 in conducting this environmental review which
7 will ultimately end up in a final Environmental
8 Impact Statement. Also here today is Phillis
9 Johnson-Ball. She is the Deputy Director of the
10 Office of Environmental Analysis. She is my
11 boss, and this is -- this is a large project and
12 we have a small agency. There is only 150
13 people in our agency, ten people in our
14 environmental group and with a project of this
15 size and the size of the environmental review
16 that we have to conduct for such a large project
17 and all the issues we need to address, it will
18 take us forever to get it done by ourselves, so
19 we are using a consulting firm to help us in
20 this process.

21 That firm is ICF International, and
22 today there are eight folks who are from ICF
23 helping us coordinate this meeting and answer
24 your questions and get you signed in for the

1 meeting.

2 At the table is Alan Summerville. He
3 is the -- will be the project manager on ICF's
4 efforts for this project. Next slide, please.

5 Surface Transportation Board, who are
6 we? We are a small federal agency in
7 Washington, DC. We have jurisdiction over the
8 economic regulation over the freight railroad
9 industry and whenever a freight railroad wants
10 to construct and operate a new railroad, they
11 need to get an approval or a license from our
12 agency before they can -- before they can do
13 that.

14 And the key areas of review our agency
15 will look at in determining whether or not to
16 approve or deny this project are what we are
17 here for today is one of them, the environmental
18 review process. They will -- The agency will --
19 the Board members will consider the potential
20 environmental impact of the proposed project if
21 they were to approve the project.

22 The other area they will look at is
23 referred to as the transportation merits of the
24 project and this goes to the purpose and need.

1 Is there a need for this project and how might
2 it impact the interstate rail network that
3 currently exists.

4 So the Board members are currently
5 three Board members. At the completion of the
6 environmental review process and completion of
7 the review on the transportation merits, which I
8 might add is done by other groups within our
9 agency. It's not my responsibility in the
10 environmental review.

11 There are a lot of -- there is folks in
12 our office that deal with economics and the
13 legal issues related to the transportation
14 merits. They look at that aspect of the project
15 and when they complete their effort, the Board
16 will issue a what we refer to as a final
17 decision.

18 In that final decision, the Board can
19 either deny the project, they can approve the
20 project or they can approve the project with
21 conditions which includes environmental
22 mitigation. Next slide, please.

23 Our environmental review process begins
24 with a phase we call Scoping and that started on

1 March 18th and the comment period for Scoping
2 ends on June 15th and the purpose of the Scoping
3 is for us to reach out to federal, state and
4 local agencies as well as communities like
5 Belvidere to come out and hear what you folks
6 have to say about the project.

7 It's does -- As I mentioned, I am from
8 Washington, DC so I am not familiar with what
9 the issues are here, what the potential impacts
10 might be of the proposed rail line.

11 So why we are here today is to hear
12 from you folks what issues should we be studying
13 in the Environmental Impact Statement that we
14 are going to review. We have been getting a lot
15 of good comments since we been here. We had
16 five meetings last week and this morning this is
17 our second this week.

18 We are getting a lot of good comments
19 about potential impacts on farming operations
20 that the proposed rail line will create, about
21 the impacts to homes from noise, general issues
22 related to adversely affecting the quality of
23 life to rural communities, all related to noise
24 and water quality, air quality, transportation

1 impacts related to delays at railroad crossings,
2 and additionally related to that, delays to
3 police departments and fire and EMS folks as
4 they are responding to a call.

5 So we are getting a lot of good
6 comments, and that's what we are here for. To
7 help -- to hear from you to help us define the
8 scope of our environmental review process.

9 We also are interested in hearing from
10 you folks on potential alternatives to the
11 proposed route. The route that you have seen on
12 all the maps on the tables in the back and on
13 our website if you have gone there, that's the
14 route that's been proposed by the Great Lakes
15 Basin group. That's their proposal.

16 The environmental review process that
17 we are going through, the regulations require
18 that we not only look at -- that we are required
19 to look at a reasonable range of alternatives,
20 so we are going to look at the route that's been
21 proposed by the Great Lakes group, but we are
22 also going to look at alternative routes for the
23 proposed rail line in our environmental review
24 and those alternatives, whatever they end up

1 being, they will all be studied equally. There
2 will be no preference given to the route
3 proposed by the applicant. Whatever
4 alternatives we come up with with your
5 assistance, they will be studied the same in our
6 environmental review process.

7 So we'd like to hear from you folks
8 also, perhaps not necessarily today, but if you
9 have ideas on alternative routes on how it may
10 avoid certain issues of concern to you, we
11 welcome you to send those in as written comments
12 to us.

13 So we'll take all that information that
14 we get through the Scoping process from you
15 folks and all your local, state and federal
16 agencies and we will issue a document called the
17 Final Scope of Study, and that will identify all
18 the issues that we are going to be reviewing in
19 our Environmental Impact Statement.

20 The Final Scope of Study will also
21 identify the alternatives that we are going to
22 study that we have come up with with your
23 assistance and the assistance of the agencies
24 and you'll be notified when that Final Scope of

1 Study is available. If you have signed up for
2 notification whether it's by E-mail or regular
3 mail, you'll be informed when that document is
4 available and you can go to our website and our
5 project website to see that. Next slide,
6 please.

7 After we finished that, we'll then
8 begin working on the draft Environmental Impact
9 Statement. There is going to be a lot of -- lot
10 of data for us to collect. We are going to have
11 do some analytical work. We are going to have
12 to do some computer modeling. We are going to
13 do some field work and then we'll be -- it will
14 be -- I believe our document will be very
15 comprehensive that we look at.

16 For example, on noise, we'll be coming
17 out to do some field monitoring of noise to
18 establish baseline conditions of noise levels
19 along the proposed route and it's likely to be
20 pretty quiet and then we'll take the information
21 about the proposed project and we'll model the
22 noise if the trains were moving through on that
23 route both the route that the applicant has
24 proposed and the alternative routes that we have

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1 developed and those are just one example of what
2 we will be looking at.

3 There is the poster board over here on
4 your left that identifies the key categories
5 that we'll be looking at, and I think it's also
6 listed in the brochure, but that's a draft list
7 and that will be subject to revision after we
8 complete this scoping process.

9 We also in preparing the draft EIS,
10 we'll look at preliminary mitigation, mitigation
11 that we think would be appropriate to avoid,
12 minimize or reduce the potential impacts of the
13 proposed project that may come up in our
14 environmental review process. We'll also
15 incorporate the mitigation which you folks may
16 have suggested to us during this scoping phase.

17 We will then issue the draft
18 Environmental Impact Statement, and it's going
19 to be a large document. I can already warn you
20 already it's got hundreds of pages. It's a big
21 project and a lot of issues for us to cover over
22 not just, again, not just the 280 miles that the
23 applicant has proposed but also the miles of the
24 route -- alternative routes that we come up

1 with, so it's going to be a large document.

2 When that's available, we'll, again,
3 notify you that it's available either by E-mail
4 or mail, whichever you express a preference for,
5 and you'll be directed on where to find that
6 document on our website sites.

7 We'll establish a comment period on
8 that draft EIS. I don't know at this point when
9 that -- how long that review period will be but
10 we'll do our best to give you guys adequate time
11 to look into that document, and what we'll be
12 looking for during that comment period is your
13 comments what subject matter we might have
14 missed or we didn't focus on an issue
15 particularly well, or if there is some data that
16 we overlooked and we'll be soliciting those
17 comments from all the interested federal, state
18 and local interest -- federal, state and local
19 agencies and other parties that might be
20 interested in the potential project.

21 We will be back out during that comment
22 period for another series of meetings. They
23 will be similar to this one and I promise you'll
24 have one in Belvidere, and we'll be -- at that

1 time point, again, so folks will have an
2 opportunity to come up like they will today to
3 provide oral comments but you folks can always
4 provide written comments to us. We encourage
5 everybody to provide us written comments.

6 If you don't speak today, don't be
7 concerned. Our -- your oral comments that you
8 provide us today, kind of jumping back, are
9 being transcribed by a court reporter so they
10 will be getting into a written format but
11 whether you speak today at oral comments or
12 written comments that you send into us, they are
13 all treated equally. There is no preference in
14 how you write us your comments. So some people
15 prefer to provide oral comments to express their
16 concerns about the project, other folks like to
17 provide written comments. Okay. Next slide,
18 please.

19 So we'll take all those comments on the
20 draft EIS and we will decide how we need to
21 respond to them. Some may be just a written
22 reply which will appear in the final EIS. A
23 written reply clarifying issues for folks or
24 it's going to be a large document. Maybe they

1 weren't able to locate the information they were
2 looking for and we'll direct them to where the
3 information can be found.

4 Some of the comments might require us
5 to do some additional work, some additional
6 modeling or we might need to come out in the
7 field to collect some additional data. So it's
8 uncertain how long it will take us to prepare
9 the final EIS. It depends on what comments you
10 provide us and what we need to do in order to
11 address those comments.

12 But when we are completed, we'll issue
13 the final Environmental Impact Statement, and
14 that document will include some recommendations,
15 and those recommendations are coming from the
16 office in which I work, the Office of
17 Environmental Analysis, and they are going to
18 the Board members. We have three Board members
19 currently.

20 The recommendations go to the three
21 Board members. They are the three folks who
22 make the decision in this case. The one
23 recommendation will be we will identify a
24 preferred alternative based on the potential

1 environmental impacts of the project. That
2 preferred alternative may or may not be the
3 route that the applicant has come up. There
4 might be one of the other alternatives that we
5 developed in our environmental review process.

6 We also recommend environmental
7 mitigation, what we finally recommend is
8 mitigation. That will likely be a lengthy list
9 of hundreds of measures that we think should be
10 adopted to mitigate potential impacts.

11 So what those recommendations mean is
12 if the Board chooses to approve this project, we
13 recommend that they select the preferred
14 alternatives that we have identified and we
15 recommend that they impose all the mitigation
16 that we have identified for the project, and,
17 typically, the Board accepts our
18 recommendations. They will accept -- If they
19 approve the project, they will impose the
20 preferred alternative on the applicant
21 regardless of whether or not it was the
22 applicant's original proposal and they typically
23 also impose the entirety of our environmental
24 mitigation that we have recommended to them and

1 they often add some additional mitigation
2 measures of their own.

3 As far as the timeframe is concerned,
4 this is a large project, with many issues to
5 address, and it's going to take us at least two
6 or three years before we get to the point where
7 we can issue the final Environmental Impact
8 Statement. It's just a big project and many
9 issues to look at, so it's -- it's going to be
10 some time.

11 So some folks may have heard that
12 construction is going to start in 18 months and
13 that's not going to happen, so, again, as I
14 mentioned before, after we completed the final
15 Environmental Impact Statement, that completes
16 our environmental review process.

17 Likely about that same time, if not
18 sooner, the other offices within our agency
19 would have completed their review of the
20 transportation merits of the project so the
21 Board will have all the information it needs to
22 make a decision in this case.

23 But, again, it's the options are deny,
24 approve or approve with conditions including the

1 environmental mitigation and the Board it's --
2 ultimately once they have reviewed the entire
3 record, they actually just vote on the project,
4 and with -- currently we have three members. We
5 have been authorized to go to five so depending
6 on how many members we have at the time three
7 years or so down the road, the majority vote
8 carries the decision so whether we need -- there
9 is still three members, there need to be two
10 votes to approve or two votes to deny and that
11 would complete our agency's role in this
12 process.

13 There are going to be other federal
14 agencies that need to make decisions in this
15 case and a couple of them include -- one would
16 be the Army Corps of Engineers. They have to
17 make a decision on potential impacts to waters
18 of the US including wetlands and streams and the
19 US Coast Guard would have to make a decision on
20 major bridge crossings that are proposed with
21 the proposed rail line. There are likely to be
22 other federal agencies that will get involved in
23 the project as well. Next slide, please.

24 So this is the purpose and needs slide

1 and we have labeled it as Applicant's Purpose
2 and Need, applicant referring to the Great Lakes
3 Basin folks and we have titled it Applicant's
4 Purpose and Need because it's not a project of
5 the Surface Transportation Board.

6 The Board did not propose this project.
7 We did not come up with the idea. We did not
8 determine there is a need for this project. We
9 are simply a licensing agency and when a party
10 comes to us for authority to construct and
11 operate a rail line, we are required to act on
12 that request.

13 And so the purpose and need for this
14 project is as defined by the Great Lakes Basin
15 folks, and that includes to provide Class 1
16 railroads which are the largest railroads in the
17 country based on their annual revenue such as
18 BNSF Railway, Union Pacific, CSX, for example,
19 to provide Class I railroads and a regional
20 railroad including the Wisconsin and Southern.

21 They currently utilize the Chicago
22 metropolitan rail network with a bypass to avoid
23 the congestion that currently occurs in the
24 Chicago area. The Great Lakes Basin Group also

1 states that the proposed rail line would add
2 capacity to the regional rail network to
3 accommodate existing and potential future rail
4 traffic growth, and next slide, please.

5 And there -- the Applicant's Proposed
6 Action, again, applicant referring to the Great
7 Lakes folks, the proposed action is what the
8 proposed rail line. Their route, again, this is
9 their route, another route, would extend about
10 278 miles from southern Wisconsin going south
11 down through Illinois turning east and northeast
12 and ending in northwestern Indiana.

13 They would -- They also propose to
14 construct a rail terminal near Manteno, Illinois
15 that would be used for switching, working on
16 trains to service and maintain their rolling
17 stock such as locomotives and railcars and they
18 would also offer that service and maintenance
19 capabilities to their rail customers. Next
20 slide, please.

21 This is just a map that's available in
22 our brochure and in our project website of the
23 route. Again, it's extending down from southern
24 Wisconsin and down through Illinois and over

1 into northwestern Indiana. Next slide, please.

2 Next, I just want to give you an
3 overview of two websites that are available to
4 help you participate in our process and also to
5 keep you informed of what the Surface
6 Transportation Board is doing during our
7 environment review process.

8 This first website is our agency
9 website and I think the address is in the
10 brochure, www.stb.dot.gov and that website is
11 where you can go to file your comments
12 electronically and I also wanted to note that we
13 try to maintain a very transparent process, so
14 all correspondence coming into our agency
15 including regular mail and E-mail from outside
16 parties goes up on our website and all outgoing
17 correspondence from our agency to outside
18 parties goes up on the website.

19 So you'll be able to go in there and
20 actually look at all of the scoping comments we
21 have been getting so far. You can see what
22 neighboring counties are saying, what your
23 neighbors are saying. You'll be able to follow
24 correspondence between my office, Office of

1 Environmental Analysis, and the Great Lakes
2 Basin folks over the course of this project.
3 There is a lot of information we need from them
4 in order to do our environmental review process
5 accurately.

6 For example, we need them to provide us
7 with projected train numbers for each section of
8 the rail line from Wisconsin to Indiana. We
9 need that information to do -- to analyze the
10 potential impacts on traffic delays. We need
11 that information to do our noise modeling.

12 There is a lot of analytical work that
13 needs that information, so we are going to be
14 developing a list of information we need from
15 the Great Lakes Basin folks; and it will
16 probably go out over a series of time as we get
17 into our review process.

18 And so you'll be able to see what
19 questions we are asking the Great Lakes folks
20 and you'll be able to see what answers they give
21 back to us, and that will all be available on
22 this website. Next slide, please.

23 We have also developed a project
24 specific website. This website is developed and

1 sponsored by the Surface Transportation Board
2 specifically for our environmental review
3 process of this project and that address also is
4 in the brochure. It's
5 greatlakesbasinraileis.com and it provides a
6 background about the proposed project. It
7 summarizes our environmental review process. It
8 has a page with a lot of maps which you may find
9 useful.

10 All the maps that you see on the tables
11 in the back are all available on that website.
12 You can also open up a file using Google Earth
13 if you are familiar with that program, open that
14 up, open that file up and you can zoom around.
15 The alignment opens up automatically when you
16 open up Google Earth when you click on that file
17 and you can zoom around and go down and actually
18 look at your backyard and see your kids' swing
19 set if it's there, you can get down to that
20 level of detail.

21 We also have a place on there where you
22 can sign up for our project mailing list, so if
23 you have neighbors or friends or relatives who
24 weren't able to come to today's meeting, you can

1 direct them to this website and they can sign up
2 to receive notifications from us as we go
3 through our environmental review process.

4 And one thing I just want to mention,
5 also, if you have friends or neighbors,
6 relatives that weren't able to come to this
7 morning's meeting or any of our meetings, we are
8 having an on line scoping meeting, a week from
9 tomorrow April 27th. It will actually be very
10 similar to what we are doing here today. I'll
11 run through the same presentation for those
12 folks. Folks will have an opportunity to speak
13 during that scoping meeting like you will here
14 shortly. They will need to register if they
15 want to speak and we'll be able to -- I don't
16 know how it works, it's beyond me, but I'll be
17 able to pass the microphone from one person to
18 the next who have registered to speak and
19 they'll be able to provide us oral comments
20 during that online meeting, and we'll also have
21 a court reporter set up during that online
22 scoping meeting and that court reporter will be
23 recording and preparing transcripts for that
24 meeting as well. So that's an option for anyone

1 that may not have been able to make any of our
2 meetings last week or this week.

3 Okay. I think that's it. I am going
4 to turn it over to Scott.

5 MR. GRAVES: Thanks, Dave. So we are
6 going to begin the oral comment portion of
7 today's meeting and just maybe a couple of
8 points to help make that process go a little bit
9 more smoothly here.

10 First, as you may have noted, we have a
11 court reporter, so we are going to be using her
12 transcripts to help guide the preparation of the
13 draft Environmental Impact Statement and because
14 these are public proceedings and that's a public
15 document, if there is personal information you
16 don't want to appear in a public document, then
17 please don't make comments with that personal
18 information. Just a head's up there.

19 It always helps to speak clearly and
20 slowly. That will help the court reporter, that
21 will help the representatives from the Board,
22 Dave and Phillis and Alan from our team hear
23 what you have to say. Please when you come up
24 here, state your name and spell your name, both

1 first and last name. That will help as well.

2 Thank you.

3 And for each speaker, we have allotted
4 three minutes to make your comments and Tiffany
5 is going to provide a little bit of guidance for
6 when there is 30 seconds remaining in your time
7 and then when your time is up.

8 We have a lot of folks here who want to
9 make comments so out of respect for everybody --
10 so out of respect for everybody, please try to
11 adhere to the three-minute allotment.

12 To help the process get started, I am
13 going to call the first three speakers up and
14 we'll have two folks take a seat here and one
15 person will be speaking and then as each person
16 finishes, I'll call another name to kind of
17 stage everybody. That will help the process go
18 a little bit more smoothly for everyone I think.

19 I think after the meeting -- This is
20 not a Q and A process here for this particular
21 meeting. There was prior to the comments that
22 we had we had an open house. After the meeting,
23 Dave and Phillis and the rest of the ICF team
24 will be available to answer questions as well

1 while the rest of us kind of take some of the
2 materials and put things away here.

3 So with that, I'd like to call three
4 people, Toria Funderburg, Daniel Kane and Joshua
5 Sage. Please come on up.

6 TORIA FUNDERBURG: My name is Toria
7 Funderburg, T-O-R-I-A, F-U-N-D-E-R-B-U-R-G. My
8 husband's family has been a farmer in Boone
9 County for the last 150 years, from the mid
10 1800s and we believe in progress but progress
11 through responsible action.

12 We feel the building of the GLBT would
13 be an irresponsible act and have two good
14 reasons to support this statement.

15 Our precious Mollisol is the richest
16 soil in earth. These soils represent only 7
17 percent of the ice-free land area not covered by
18 water. The Midwest has 25 percent of that
19 global 7 percent and because of their high
20 productivity rate, the Mollisol represents one
21 of the more economically important soil types.

22 They are formed in semi-arid and semi
23 humid areas, typically under a grassland cover,
24 most commonly found in a band 50 degrees north

1 of the equator and generally contain limestone,
2 loess and windblown sand. The process that
3 forms this type of soil is decompensation of
4 grasslands and humidification which took
5 centuries to develop. Mollisols are high in
6 organic matter and are nutrient enriched.

7 Our soil in Boone County has been cared
8 for by many generations of farmers. It was
9 estimated in 2003 that between 14 and 26 percent
10 of the present grassland ecosystems still remain
11 untouched relatively in a natural state because
12 of conservation and land management programs.
13 This train would displace, waste and destroy our
14 most valuable soil.

15 Most of the Midwest is flat by nature.
16 With glacial tilled and pluvial runoff of sand
17 nutrients and rocks from the last ice age
18 10,000 years ago, it grows abundant crops,
19 catches and filters our rain water which fills
20 our shallow and deep aquifers with clean,
21 potable water for people, livestock and crop
22 irrigation.

23 Besides the compaction and destruction
24 of this soil, I am most concerned about the

1 toxication of our clean aquifers and from
2 possible derailments and chemical spills.

3 This soil would allow for quick
4 percolation into a shallow water table. It
5 would be long lasting, causing devastation to
6 our water supply which sustains life for all of
7 your cities, some 55,000 county residents and
8 may in the future be necessary to sustain urban
9 sprawl which conditions continues to move west
10 into our county.

11 Many hazardous materials besides Bakken
12 oil are carried on this rail, phosphoric acid,
13 hydrochloric acid, formaldehyde, vinyl chloride
14 methanol which is highly flammable, just to name
15 a few, and according to an estimate by the
16 National Transportation Board, almost every two
17 weeks a train derailment leads to a chemical
18 spill in the United States. Some of these
19 spills are so serious that they require
20 evacuation from local residents. The occurrence
21 and the frequency of train accidents has been
22 increasing since 1997.

23 In 2012, in Paulsboro, New Jersey a
24 freight train derailed over a creek. One of the

1 cars was breached carrying vinyl chloride. 500
2 residents in a 12-mile radius were evacuated for
3 three days. A half a teaspoon, 600,000 gallons
4 is toxic if it's combined. We think this would
5 devastate our water table, our deep aquifers and
6 we ask for the Surface Board Transportation to
7 consider our natural resources. Thank you.

8 DANIEL KANE: Daniel Kane, Executive
9 Director of the Boone County Conservation
10 District. I'm sorry. K-A-N-E. I am here
11 representing the Boone County Conservation
12 District and we have a cover letter and
13 comments.

14 The Boone County Conservation District
15 is both directly and indirectly impacted by the
16 proposed route of the GLBT. The Boone -- BCCD
17 is a local unit of government established by
18 local referendum in 1964 as detailed in its
19 state enabling legislation. Our state enabling
20 legislation is Illinois Chapter 70, Special
21 Districts, 70 ILCS 410/Conservation District
22 Act. Section 3 describes the purpose and intent
23 of this Act.

24 The purpose of this Act to is to

1 provide for the creation of Conservation
2 Districts, such districts may and with -- their
3 principal purpose is to acquire in fee or lesser
4 right or interest preserve and maintain wild
5 land and other open land, scenic roadways and
6 pathways, hold such real property with or
7 without public access for the education,
8 pleasure and recreation of the public or for
9 other open space values.

10 Preserve portions thereof in their
11 natural condition and undertake development of
12 other portions thereof. Manage and use such
13 real property in such a manner and with such
14 restrictions as will leave it unimpaired for the
15 benefit of future generations and otherwise
16 promote the conservation of nature, flora and
17 fauna, natural environment and natural resources
18 of the District.

19 With respect to eminent domain or
20 condemnation, property owned by a conservation
21 district may not be subject to eminent domain or
22 condemnation proceedings. The Boone County
23 Conservation District mission statement is to
24 preserve and manage natural areas and open

1 spaces for ecological, educational and
2 recreational benefits of present and future
3 generations.

4 The Boone County Conservation District
5 owns and manages approximately 3500 acres of
6 important conservation land within Boone County,
7 Illinois. Most of these lands are open to the
8 massive public uses such as hiking, bicycling,
9 hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, birding,
10 canoeing, paddling, picnicking and other similar
11 activities.

12 There are two BCCD properties directly
13 affected by the GLBT route. The Kishwaukee
14 Valley Conservation Area between Milepost 203.10
15 and Milepost 203.50 and along Prairie Trail
16 Milepost 212.50. There are two more BCC
17 properties indirectly impacted. They include
18 the Picasaw Fen conservation area located in
19 approximately 1,000 meters west of Milepost
20 209.6 and the Sewell Conservation Area located
21 approximately 400 meters east of Milepost 200.5.

22 The BCCD is in engaged with the
23 management and strategies that maintain,
24 improve, restore -- I'll stop and I am going to

1 stop and pass the microphone on to Mr. Sage.

2 JOSHUA SAGE: The BCCD is engaged in
3 management strategies that maintain, improve,
4 restore, establish or develop public
5 improvements or infrastructure serving public
6 access and passive recreation activities.

7 In addition, the BCCD is deeply
8 involved in preserving, restoring, buffering and
9 enhancing remnant native habitats, restoring
10 former croplands and native plant communities of
11 varied ecological types in conjunction with
12 landscape position and geomorphic function.

13 The District has also been active with
14 requiring new conservation lands, prioritize
15 long-term conservation planning efforts and
16 opportunities afforded by nature's willing
17 sellers and funding sought awarded by several
18 grant sources. There is a splay of documents
19 that accompany this cover letter. These
20 documents represent the District and community's
21 efforts to plan and strategize conservation work
22 including public land acquisition and strategy
23 for private stewardship.

24 There is prime studies of flora and

1 fauna in Boone County and surrounding areas
2 within the bounds of the Kishwaukee River
3 watershed and creeks and streams.

4 Some of these references are included
5 to provide you and your peers with information
6 that include further research is needed to
7 effect and protect critical and sensitive land
8 including areas that are likely contributing
9 substantial groundwater recharge to the highly
10 permeable geologic material located at or near
11 the land's surface.

12 They are documents affiliated with land
13 acquisition grants that describe the character
14 and quality of the land and water resources that
15 these acquisitions are striving to preserve.
16 The District can provide additional
17 documentation if you and other reviewers seek
18 the input.

19 There are wetlands inventory maps of
20 key segments of the proposed railroad route.
21 They utilize the United States Fish & Wildlife
22 Service, 1987 National Wetland Inventory which
23 are now incorporated as a GIS layer in the Boone
24 County GIS database.

1 There are several studies of flora and
2 fauna completed by state and local agencies and
3 organizations. Inventory is completed by BCCD
4 Natural Resources Department and other natural
5 resources assessments. They are local and
6 regional planning initiatives focusing on
7 greenway infrastructure and efforts to address
8 issues and current concerns detailed in the
9 Illinois Wildlife Action Plan.

10 The Boone -- I'd like to speak shortly
11 about the Boone County Regional Stormwater
12 Management Plan. The Boone County Regional
13 Stormwater Committee adopted a new regional
14 stormwater management plan in December of 2011.
15 This plan provides important guidance that
16 should be implemented if the railroad project
17 moves forward.

18 Key aspects that need to be evaluated
19 are planning, design and implementing best
20 management practices that address the stormwater
21 impact associated with the impervious nature
22 imposed by the railroad's footprint on the
23 landscape, including but not limited to
24 mitigating additional stormwater runoff,

1 addressing monitoring of -- addressing and
2 monitoring the quality of stormwater leaving the
3 footprint of the railroad, avoiding mitigating
4 the impact on wetlands and wetland buffer areas,
5 mitigating impacts to groundwater infiltration
6 and recharge, ensuring that the quality and
7 character of groundwater is not adversely
8 affected by activities associated with
9 construction, operation and maintenance of the
10 railroad and associated infrastructure.

11 SANDRA KENNEDY: My name is Sandra
12 Kennedy, S-A-N-D-R-A K-E-N-N-E-D-Y. I am a
13 member of the O'Rourke Range and I am a leader
14 in the Boy Scouts of America. All I have to say
15 is it's not acceptable for all the people, all
16 the farmers in the area and all the young
17 children.

18 I propose that I will get a petition
19 together and help formulate a group to go
20 against this for all the men, women and
21 children, farmers, older, younger and even the
22 babies in the community that will be affected by
23 this proposal. It is not acceptable. No amount
24 of money can pay me off to stop this.

1 We must all combine all ourselves
2 together, group together and formulate a strong
3 force to go against this because once the land
4 is taken away, it can never be replaced and once
5 110 trains come through, there will be more and
6 more because they will have their foot in the
7 door. Please stop it. Thank you.

8 RICHARD BEUTH: My name Richard Beuth,
9 R-I-C-H-A-R-D B-E-U-T-H. I am president of the
10 Winnebago-Boone Farm Bureau. We have 90,700
11 members in these two counties of which 1,150
12 members are voting members which means they are
13 farmers or they own farmland.

14 We have been very concerned about this
15 Great Lakes Basin Railroad project since we
16 heard about it in the media last year. At that
17 time, it was only in Winnebago County but now of
18 course it affects both counties.

19 Last week our Board of Directors voted
20 unanimously to oppose this project at this time
21 but our organization will continue to evaluate
22 the project and have the right to change our
23 position if the economic interests and benefits
24 outweigh the costs.

1 At this point, we know the Great Lake
2 Basin is a new company with no railroad
3 experience, that wants to build the largest
4 railroad in 125 years to provide a bypass for
5 freight rail traffic around Chicago but no
6 railroad has said they want to use it.

7 We understand the STB is not holding
8 these meetings to answer questions about Great
9 Lakes Basin project, but we have many questions
10 about the project which remain unanswered, and
11 request that the STB conduct a full review of
12 the transportation merits of this project.

13 GLB includes a 50-foot corridor for the
14 future use by utilities in its current plan. We
15 request that the STB exclude any nonrailroad
16 uses from its consideration of the project.
17 Should Great Lake Basin request authority to
18 exercise eminent domain, we will oppose any such
19 request.

20 Over a thousand acres of highly
21 productive farmland will be lost in these two
22 counties if constructed. This farmland cannot
23 be replaced. In fact, over 1 percent of the
24 tillable Boone County farmland will be used by

1 the railroad and 3 to 4 percent more will be
2 affected by land locked or severed parcels. Ag
3 in Boone County contributes \$361 million
4 annually. One percent of that is a \$3 and a
5 half million dollar loss every year.

6 In addition to removing the valuable
7 natural resource which cannot be replaced, this
8 project will cause both surface and tile line
9 drainage issues resulting in increased daily
10 traffic by impacted residents, school buses,
11 emergency responders, and farmers with farm
12 machinery and poses public health and safety
13 issues.

14 I encourage every Winnebago and Boone
15 County farmer to write a comment to the STB and
16 tell how your farming operation will be
17 affected. The Farm Bureau strongly recommends
18 to the STB that there be a full review of the
19 transportation merits of this project and not
20 grant an exemption for this project. Thank you.

21 JULIE NEWHOUSE: Julie Newhouse.
22 J-U-L-I-E, N-E-W-H-O-U-S-E. I serve as
23 secretary of the Winnebago-Boone Farm Bureau
24 Board which represents over 400 families in

1 Boone County. Our mission is to be the voice,
2 resource and advocate for farm families and
3 agriculture while promoting stewardship for
4 today and future generations.

5 Today I would like to address just
6 three of our many concerns about the proposed
7 rail route.

8 First of all, we are concerned about
9 the development in wrong places. Poorly placed
10 railroads could accelerate the loss of farmland
11 as they promote industrial growth on agriculture
12 land. We support development in areas zoned for
13 development. The best possible social utility
14 is not fulfilled by destroying prime farmland,
15 especially specifically zoned and protected for
16 agriculture.

17 As said earlier, we estimate the
18 proposed route will consume at least 776 acres
19 of Boone County land which represents 1 percent
20 of our farmland. That's significant for us.
21 This proposed route goes through our next-door
22 neighbor's farm and our farm will not have acres
23 taken by eminent domain but we still may suffer
24 from secondary health, safety and welfare

1 effects.

2 In our valley, changed elevations and
3 new bridges will create new flooding patterns.
4 Damaged inter-farm tile systems may create new
5 wet areas for us. Five years after the
6 pipeline, neighboring farms still had drainage
7 issues. Closed roads will cause us precious
8 time. Each crossing increases safety hazards
9 and our shallow wells could become contaminated
10 by hazardous spills.

11 Secondly, farmland is not undeveloped
12 but in Boone County it represents over 175 years
13 of devoted hearts and calloused hands which
14 developed malaria-ridden swampland into
15 productive farmland. Water was channeled to be
16 used wisely and to allow fertile ground to be
17 tilled and allow families to live and prosper
18 here.

19 Across our county one can see
20 windbreaks, waterways, contours and other
21 erosion preventive measures all developed by
22 generations of farm families. Our Comprehensive
23 Plan describes Boone County as the last
24 remaining stronghold of true rural character and

1 intact agricultural lands in the Chicago,
2 Milwaukee, Madison, Rockford diamond.

3 Thousands of people travel to Boone
4 County just to enjoy our fair, agri-tourism and
5 niche markets.

6 Finally, Boone County's aquifers are
7 even sought by Chicago. We are devoted stewards
8 of our water because our children and our
9 grandchildren are the first ones to drink that
10 water. I have never met a developer from
11 outside the county that had that kind of
12 dedication to our water. Instead, they plow
13 through our waterways, our woodlands, our
14 grasslands, our wetlands and pastures which all
15 help protect our precious water supply.

16 Please do not allow Great Lakes Basin a
17 route that cuts through our agriculture zoned
18 area, dissects over 150 farm parcels and thus
19 threatens to diminish our ability to have
20 productive farms and safe water. We believe a
21 project of this scope and impact should be sited
22 where it has the greatest long-term potential
23 for public good and public development and it
24 should not be approved at all if for a

1 short-term economic gain.

2 JOHN CLELAND: John Cleland. J-O-H-N
3 C-L-E-L-A-N-D. I serve as vice president of the
4 Winnebago-Boone Farm Bureau, but my comments
5 this morning address how I'll be personally
6 affected by the rail line proposal.

7 I estimate that 6 percent of my
8 farmland would be consumed by the project.
9 Additionally, an overpass is proposed for my
10 road which will require many acres to widen the
11 right-of-way to support the bridge. My son
12 Scott dreams of making a living off of our
13 sentinel farm. How far is it -- How fair is
14 eminent domain to him?

15 Our farm located on Troy Bedrock Valley
16 is named Intercreeken Farm as it has two Grade A
17 creeks flowing through it. In order to achieve
18 the 1 percent grade on my property, many yards
19 of soil will need to be moved in from elsewhere.
20 I am concerned about the quality of soil, weed
21 disease and toxic residue that may be brought
22 in.

23 Additionally, I have concerns regarding
24 access to my fields, water drainage and broken

1 tiles, restricted water flow under the railroad,
2 bridges over the creeks that may restrict the
3 flow of water during heavy rains and land locked
4 parcels that won't be accessible at all. As you
5 can see, the effect on my 112-year old family
6 farm could be devastating.

7 The Great Lakes developers chose the
8 route because they consider farm fields
9 underdeveloped land. I would argue that Boone
10 County farmland is not underdeveloped but rather
11 represents a thriving business community.

12 Great Lakes views our soil as merely a
13 base to create their desired 1 percent gradient.
14 Our soils help feed the world. In this project
15 alone, 21,000 total acres will be taken out of
16 production. The average US farmer feeds about
17 167 people per year. Food for over 7,000 people
18 per year will have to be grown elsewhere. What
19 a shame since this area has some of the most
20 fertile soil in the world.

21 Finally, Boone County is home to many
22 waterways and wetlands. Areas of our country
23 also draw water from the shallowest aquifers for
24 water for their families and livestock as we do

1 at our home. The risk of a rail accident
2 resulting in water contamination is very high.
3 For this reason, I ask the STB to thoroughly
4 examine the risks to our area water systems. I
5 ask that you protect our livelihoods and the
6 future of agriculture in Boone and neighboring
7 counties by denying the Great Lakes Basin
8 Railroad's request to build this project.

9 AMY NYSTROM: We are Scott and Amy
10 Nystrom. S-C-O-T-T, A-M-Y N-Y-S-T-R-O-M. I am
11 not a public speaker so I apologize.

12 I gave you a packet of information. I
13 am not going to give you my address but this is
14 our farm. And as you can imagine, six days ago
15 we pulled this up. I have questions that I am
16 supposed to -- or questions that affect the
17 environmental aspect of our farm.

18 Will it be land locked? Yes. As you
19 can see, it goes right across our driveway all
20 the way down our farm, blocks our home that we
21 just built three years, my husband with his own
22 hands.

23 Will you suffer adverse travel?
24 Absolutely. They are going to close down Edison

1 Road right over here which is the route that I
2 take to work. I am a nurse. I am a trauma
3 nurse. When I am called, I get 30 minutes to
4 get to work. I have been there 20 years. I
5 would lose my job. I am shaking. Sorry.

6 Do we have land in the CRP?

7 Absolutely. This whole strip of land is CRP.

8 Do we have livestock affected? Yes. Cattle
9 farmers, we grow hay, corn for our cattle. Does
10 it create an uneconomical remnant of our parcel?
11 Yes. I mean, look at it. It goes all the way
12 across the front. The land would be worthless.

13 Does the project impact irrigation?

14 Yes. I gave you a copy of the floodplain. The
15 Army Corps of Engineers drew it up. This entire
16 area is a 990-foot volatile flood plain because
17 of the development in DeKalb County. If you
18 flip through, you'll see on your map. 990 feet,
19 that's almost three football fields.

20 Well, I am going to skip past that
21 because that affects us. This -- I mean,
22 everybody is affected by this. Now, I am going
23 to go into something else that we found and I am
24 going to directly speak to you guys.

1 Frank and Jim, when they did their
2 research obviously didn't do so well because if
3 you flip to their page in there where they filed
4 a detailed description of the environmental
5 impact of all of these farms, I want you had to
6 flip to -- Do you have the milepost?

7 SCOTT NYSTROM: 187.

8 AMY NYSTROM: We are Milepost 186
9 through 188. 186 is down here, 187 at the black
10 dot, 188 over here. As you can see, we went
11 over this right here at Milepost 187 is hundreds
12 of thousands of dollars of established nursery
13 stock, not 100, not 200, hundreds of thousands.

14 Then we have a CRP strip right here,
15 protected land. We have acres and acres of
16 wooded land on either side which you can see and
17 we have a Kishwaukee River that has a 990-foot
18 floodplain, so now if we are going to go to
19 Frank and Jim's detailed description of our
20 area, I want to read what it says. This came
21 straight from the attorneys.

22 SCOTT NYSTROM: Filed on March 27th --
23 or March 7th.

24 AMY NYSTROM: The environmental impact

1 on mile -- between Mile Markers 180 and 190,
2 they skip through all those because obviously
3 they didn't want anyone to find out, it says the
4 environmental impact for this area, there are no
5 wetlands. No wetlands? There is 990 feet of
6 floodplain, follow the floodplain. There is --

7 There are no wooded areas. There is no
8 wooded -- Frank says there is no wooded areas.
9 Do you see on your map? There is no wooded
10 areas? There is acres and acres of wooded
11 areas. Okay. And he also says that there are
12 no waterways that would be affected by this
13 segment.

14 As you can see, this is the Kishwaukee
15 River with a 990-foot volatile floodplain, so I
16 believe that you guys as the Environmental
17 Protection, whatever, Service, Department, I
18 mean, it's your obligation that if they file a
19 false report, they lied. They filed a false
20 report with you guys. They said there are no
21 waterways, there is no forest, and there is no
22 floodplain here. That's what they filed for
23 this, 180 through 190.

24 SCOTT NYSTROM: It's obvious, I mean,

1 it should be axed. The guy is a clown.

2 AMY NYSTROM: I mean, the game is over
3 today. Sorry, Frank.

4 BOB WALBERG: Good morning, everyone.
5 First, I'd like to start by thanking Mr. Navecky
6 and Ms. Johnson the willingness to provide an
7 additional meeting from what they had planned
8 really stands a clear message that they want to
9 be very open and responsive to us, their
10 willingness to pour out information so everyone
11 understands the process is very admirable and
12 very much appreciated so I want to thank them
13 for that.

14 I'm also very proud of this process.
15 Look at this room full of people. Probably one
16 of the best assets we have in Boone County is
17 the people and when considering the environment
18 our environment or our human environment, the
19 people here willing to stand up and take an
20 interest in this process, the pride in the
21 county, their concern for the property is just
22 outstanding and you folks all deserve great
23 respect for your willingness to participate.

24 The other point I wanted to make is it

1 was pointed out there is a number of websites
2 that are available and Boone County has a lot of
3 this information on their website. Thanks to
4 our administrator Mr. Genoi and his office, they
5 have all worked very hard and it created a lot
6 of extra work for them, a lady in the office
7 answered the phone because so many, many times
8 people were asking questions so we tried to our
9 best to be informative and make sure everybody
10 understands what's involved with this.

11 It's been questioned about the position
12 of the Board and we had a Committee meeting the
13 other night and I think coming out of the
14 Committee and at our County Board meeting
15 Wednesday night discussion on if we created an
16 additional County meeting, this will probably be
17 like a retreat or a working session. It won't
18 be a Board meeting as far as a business meeting
19 and so we are going to try to develop our
20 concerns that we hear.

21 There are currently available -- There
22 is a lot of information out there and our Board
23 members can bring those issues to our Board
24 meeting and we will develop the concerns that we

1 have and the things that we would like to
2 consider in this decision.

3 Hopefully, you may even consider an
4 alternate routing or proposal so we are looking
5 forward to that. Thank you very much.

6 PAUL DONLEY: My name is Paul Donley,
7 P-A-U-L D-O-N-L-E-Y. Me and two of my sons farm
8 800 acres in northern Boone County. According
9 to this proposed map, the rail line will
10 probably affect -- go through about 400 acres of
11 family farmland.

12 At planting and harvest, time is like
13 gold to farmers. Once it's spent, you never get
14 it back. They can lose -- Farmers can lose
15 thousands of dollars by lost time. Every year
16 there are crop failures everywhere in this
17 country. There is insurance for hail, flooding
18 and other problems but there is no insurance for
19 lost time.

20 Now, I figure it cost me two hours
21 every time I want to move to another field by
22 the time you fold up a piece of equipment, lock
23 it up, make it safe for road travels. You have
24 to take multiple pieces to a field so if this

1 rail line goes through a field, I have lost two
2 hours of precious time before I can get going
3 again and sometimes with weather-related
4 concerns, you have only got days or even
5 sometimes hours before the rain shows up. Just
6 a minute here.

7 So anything, any field that is split by
8 the railroad has just doubled my time to get to
9 it because I have extra time spent turning.
10 Because everyone knows it's farming, you got to
11 make rounds and rounds to do the field. Well,
12 if you cut it in half, you still got to make
13 that same number of rounds to get through there.

14 I have spent my whole life trying to
15 solve small problems before they became big
16 problems and I can't imagine that this problem
17 of getting trains through Chicago just cropped
18 up overnight. There is always something that
19 can be done. And instead, they wait until this
20 becomes an untenable position and, oh, the only
21 way out of it is to build this -- to build this
22 railroad.

23 This railroad has cost the US economy
24 already because I, like many others, near the

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1 proposed route have put my projects on hold.
2 There is no point in me spending \$10,000 to put
3 in a tile system if the rail line is going to
4 come through and destroy it. So -- and I'm not
5 the only one. I'll bet there is other people,
6 too, that they are not going to make any
7 improvements because of this.

8 So, anyway, that's all I have to say
9 about that. Thank you.

10 TOM HRIBIK: Okay. My name is Tom
11 Hribik and I am not a farmer. I am a bus driver
12 for North Boone. My opinion is my opinion. My
13 concern is the safety of my kids crossing
14 railroad tracks with high speed trains. The
15 timing it takes to get kids to school, the fact
16 that it comes so close to Capron School which is
17 our preschool for special ed, the noise it
18 causes. This is our future. Please think about
19 this. My name is Tom Hribik, T-O-M H-R-I-B-I-K.
20 Thank you.

21 RON NELSON: My name is Ron Nelson.
22 R-O-N N-E-L-S-O-N. I live in Capron, Illinois
23 on North Boone School Road. This railroad will
24 affect my farm and home. It will separate

1 50 acres from the rest of the farm. The rail
2 line will be 375 feet from my house, 275 feet
3 from the edge of my yard and I have a neighbor
4 across the road that's going to be a lot closer
5 than that.

6 On the website of the Great Basin
7 Railroad, it states that they intend to avoid
8 settled areas and have minimum impact on the
9 area residents live on today. The avoidance of
10 population centers would minimize potential
11 spills, releases and derailments while also
12 limiting air and noise and vibration impacts on
13 settled areas.

14 This track is proposed to run less than
15 one half a mile from the town of Capron and less
16 than one half of a mile from the Capron grade
17 school, a K through 4 school, with 225 students.
18 If this is not a populated enough to meet their
19 intended setback, I don't know what would.

20 This school and area will be in the way
21 of spills, releases, derailments, subject to air
22 and noise and vibration impacts. I call this
23 having an impact on the area where residents
24 live today.

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1 On the 50 acres of my farm that's being
2 separated from my main farm where the rail line
3 will go, there is at least a 20-foot elevation
4 difference between two hills where this is going
5 to run. For the rail line to maintain the
6 grades of 1 percent or less, it would have to
7 raise the track bed in the low area where
8 surface water drains across the farm in a
9 waterway and has a tile running under it in the
10 same area. They are going to have to raise it
11 up to maintain their line, and I am going to
12 have water blocked all over.

13 The tile line would be under the rail
14 line and have all the weight of the raised rail
15 bed and weight of the running trains on it
16 causing possible collapse of the tile from
17 weight and vibration.

18 This farm and home that I have has been
19 in my family since 1853. This is a
20 sesquicentennial farm that will be devalued
21 because of this railway. The prospect of this
22 being taken away by eminent domain is not right
23 to me.

24 SCOTT FOWLER: Scott Fowler. S-C-O-T-T

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1 F-O-W-L-E-R. Good morning and welcome to Boone
2 County. My name is Scott Fowler. I am a proud
3 fourth generation farmer one of 50 sesquial
4 farms here in Boone County with our fifth and
5 sixth generation up and coming. I want to speak
6 about the land use of this proposal.

7 Agriculture is one of Illinois most
8 important industry also as the United States.
9 It ranks first in the nation with 180 billion in
10 processed food sales each other. Farmlands
11 cannot be created. It takes a million years to
12 create one inch of progressive topsoil and once
13 the land has been developed, it can't be
14 returned. This is going to hurt Boone County.

15 With the average cost to operate an
16 acre of farmland at \$70 for repairs, fuel and
17 hire for the additional cost not to mention
18 other supplies needed this proposal take from
19 farmers, some of which are already struggling
20 with tough commodities.

21 If the GLB railroad cuts through the
22 middle of a 40-acre square field, the farmer
23 will lose six acres and seven acres will become
24 the headlands along the track. With corn prices

1 at \$3.81 a bushel as of April 17th, a field
2 yielding 200 bushel acre would lose \$4,572 a
3 year just from the train and the headlands
4 yielding three bushel less will also result in
5 additional lost for the farmer.

6 To add this loss, his gateway is on the
7 southeast corner of his 40 acres. The bins are
8 on the northeast corner of his property. He has
9 two choices, let GLB provide him a private
10 crossing to get new problems, loss of time, more
11 wear and tear on hydraulics, equipment, leaving
12 tractors idle longer, more fuel consumption,
13 also every time a farmer exits a piece of
14 equipment, he is at an increased risk for an
15 accident. Not to mention the unneeded physical
16 demand that this will put on him.

17 Even taking the liability of the set
18 gates and possible losing more land, the other
19 choice divide one mile around an average of 15
20 times to get his crops back to his property to
21 maintain storage more than doubling his time and
22 fuel expense, all done in hopes that he doesn't
23 get stopped at the crossing and he can get his
24 equipment through the underpasses.

1 These farms are lucky. Other farms
2 will lose land altogether. The railroad will
3 leave parts so small they will be unable to be
4 farmed, a \$2,286 loss for every three acres of
5 corn billed. The maps show many farms will
6 suffer this, some in more than one parcel.

7 Since 1950, an average loss of
8 77,000 acres of land in Illinois and this one
9 proposal could cost Boone County 7500 acres plus
10 some. This is our county, Boone County. Thank
11 you.

12 KATHY STEFANELLI: Hi. I am Kathy
13 Stefanelli. That's K-A-T-H-Y, S-T-E-F, as in
14 Frank, A-N-E-L-L-I. I was born and raised in
15 Capron. My parents Anita and Mike Luncker still
16 live there and my brother Michael lives there,
17 too. I am really concerned about the economic
18 impact that this railroad passing less than a
19 half a mile from the town of Capron.

20 I think it's funny that the GLB states
21 that they are going to stay away from a town of
22 any size more than a half a mile so obviously
23 they do not consider Capron a town, but it is.
24 And it's struggled over the years. It's had a

1 lot of small businesses go out of business.

2 The GLB narrative, route narrative,
3 states they were going to put an at-grade
4 crossing on 173. It looks like maybe they have
5 changed their mind and are going to put an
6 overpass there. But either way, people are
7 going to avoid taking the route of 173 if at all
8 possible just to avoid any impact with the
9 trains and that's going to impact the town.

10 I know that the small little gas
11 station that just went in I'm sure looked at the
12 number of cars passing through town on a daily
13 basis in order to make their decision to go to
14 build the building in town. It's going to
15 impact the small little pizza shop, the resale
16 shop, the convenient stores in town, not
17 including the impact to the school that they are
18 going to pass about 1200 yards from.

19 There's going to be a lot of noise,
20 vibration. As somebody else stated, it is the
21 elementary and preschool for their special ed.
22 As we all know, children with special needs
23 don't always -- and preschoolers don't always
24 listen to their teachers. The possibility of

1 one of them wandering off and getting lost and
2 killed by the train that's running through town
3 possibly at 70 miles an hour every 13 minutes is
4 greatly increased.

5 I am also worried about the impact of
6 the values of the homes. There is many other
7 small towns in the area that you can live in.
8 Why would you want to live in Capron if you have
9 the potential of a derailment and a chemical
10 spill and since it's on the west side of town,
11 the westerly winds would sweep that into town
12 and being as close as it is to the elementary
13 school could if it was say antidesmonia leaking,
14 how many children would we lose.

15 My parents have a home that Ron Nelson
16 mentioned. It's going to be 225 feet from my
17 parents' bedroom window. They made sure that
18 they are not taking any of my parents' land.
19 There will be no compensation to them but it
20 will probably devalue the house by about
21 two-thirds because who would want a train
22 running 225 feet from your house going 70 miles
23 an hour every 13 minutes both day and night with
24 rail crossings going ding, ding, ding constantly

1 in your ear. Thank you for being here to listen
2 to our concerns.

3 RICHARD PIERCE: Richard Pierce.
4 R-I-C-H-A-R-D P-I-E-R-C-E. My name is Richard
5 Pierce. I represent the Capron grades and these
6 were all very excellent statements so far and,
7 unfortunately, I don't have too much to add to
8 it because of all the other previous statements.

9 But one thing I have not heard if they
10 got to have this so bad is a proposed different
11 route. My proposed route would be going along
12 Interstates 39 and Interstates 80 and then would
13 pick up the Elgin/Joliet line and run alongside
14 it. It would be less impact and would not run
15 through the heart of the farmland communities.
16 The roads are already there. It's just really
17 running alongside. It would be less impact on
18 all concerned.

19 Also, I am concerned about railroad
20 crossings in general. Many of you probably do
21 not remember this happening years ago but a very
22 unfortunate accident happened in McLean,
23 Illinois. A state highway railroad signals were
24 not operational because of a maintenance worker

1 failing to turn the switch back on to the
2 railroad signals.

3 As a result, two people died in a
4 horrible accident that should not have happened
5 and because the railroad signals were not
6 operational. Who's to say that this would not
7 happen at all. That is all.

8 SHERRY GIESECKE: My name is Sherry
9 Giesecke. S-H-E-R-R-Y, G-I-E-S-E-C-K-E. I am a
10 member of the Boone County Board from
11 District 1.

12 The labor practices and political
13 climate in Cook County and it's collar counties
14 have necessitated that an alternate route be
15 developed to streamline the movement of
16 commodities across this country. This is not a
17 recent problem, however, we are now faced with a
18 new solution.

19 Throughout your review of the
20 application by Great Lakes Basin Transportation,
21 I urge you to cut no corners and include in your
22 deliberations a review of all required aspects
23 of this application including the socioeconomic
24 impact this may have on Boone county.

1 Agriculture, as you have heard, is both
2 a cultural heritage and a primary economic
3 engine in Boone County. I urge you to make
4 certain that your decision weighs the time
5 savings and economic benefit to national and
6 international companies attributed to the
7 proposed rail line against the cost to the
8 legacy and agricultural economy of Boone County.

9 Rather than confiscate productive
10 farmland to resolve this transportation problem,
11 it appears that time and money would be far
12 better spent addressing the challenges inherent
13 in currently labor practices, making
14 improvements to capitalize on the existing
15 infrastructures, and identifying and fixing the
16 significant bottlenecks facing major water
17 transportation systems.

18 I trust that you will strictly adhere
19 to your state of process and ensure that your
20 deliberations will be comprehensive and include
21 considerations of what the citizens of Boone
22 County feel is best for them rather than only
23 what is best for large business. Thank you.

24 BARB SAGER: My name is Barb Sager.

1 B-A-R-B S-A-G-E-R. I am a trustee for the
2 Capron Rescue Squad District which is the EMS
3 provider for the northern half of Boone County.
4 And I am concerned for the safety both with
5 people who live in Boone County and for those
6 that are just traveling through.

7 If the proposed Great Lakes railroad
8 slices its way north and south through the heart
9 of farming country, changing road demographics
10 and holding up travel, I fear our safety will be
11 the grim result of this process. There are a
12 few concerns which I'd like to address.

13 First of all would be the length and
14 response time for our ambulance. This could go
15 from a normal response time to added five or
16 even ten minutes of a delay in an ambulance
17 getting to that waited loved one who needs their
18 assistance. Time is of the essence. Those
19 extra couple of minutes, five or ten, could mean
20 the difference between life and death, but the
21 impact is not just the response of time.

22 All of the heart centers, stroke
23 centers and our Level 1 trauma center is in
24 Rockford. Should a patient be on the east side

1 of this project require the service of one of
2 these facilities, and should a train block that
3 route, the potential for a negative outcome
4 rises drastically with every passing minute.

5 The only other option would be to
6 utilize an air ambulance but the cost to the
7 patient would be extreme. Charging \$1,000 per
8 mile plus a response fee. But it's not only the
9 ambulances, time is of the essence for fire
10 departments and law enforcement agencies just as
11 well.

12 A review of the impact of the GLB
13 project would not be complete without an honest
14 assessment of the impact of an accident or a
15 derailment. Should there be a fire, an
16 explosion, or a toxic materials incident, time
17 for adequate resources to be on on the scene
18 will be measured in hours, not minutes. And if
19 the toxic material incident would happened to be
20 on the trail with travels within 800 feet of
21 Capron elementary property, at the west edge of
22 the Village of Capron, the outcome would be
23 grim, especially when Capron elementary has the
24 preschool programs for students with special

1 needs for the Northland School District.

2 Another concern is traveling on our
3 roads. I am thinking of our senior citizens who
4 have to contemplate the speed of this train as
5 it roars through our quiet countryside. Or will
6 it force them to stay at their residence,
7 fearful of traveling to town, to church, to
8 shopping, not wanting to put themselves in
9 harm's way.

10 And our school buses which have to
11 cross these train tracks multiple times with
12 each route. I am also fearful for the students
13 who travel down North Boone School Road to get
14 to school, sporting events or to club
15 activities. How long will it take until a car
16 full of teens fearful of being late for school
17 or the football game will try to beat that
18 train. I cringe to think of that outcome.

19 My list of concerns could go on and on
20 but we are concerned that this proposed railway
21 will adversely affect our public safety and,
22 therefore, we ask you, the STB, not grant the
23 Great Lakes Basin Railroad an exemption but
24 instead require a full and rigorous

1 Environmental Impact Study. Thank you for your
2 time.

3 KAREN KENNEY: Karen Kenney.
4 K-A-R-E-N, K-E-N-N-E-Y. Thank you for coming to
5 Boone County. I am a Leroy Township Trustee.
6 Developers of various kinds come to Boone County
7 in which to run an oil pipeline through our
8 county, another one to slant drill for our water
9 resources, a wind developer wanted to erect 100
10 500 foot wind turbines through the northern part
11 of our country to use our land as a utility
12 closet for the greater Chicago area, and now a
13 private developer wants to use our county for a
14 railroad corridor.

15 I'm giving you a copy of the Leroy
16 Township Comprehensive Plan. We are one of nine
17 townships in Boone County. Illinois Complied
18 Statutes Chapter 60 gives townships the right to
19 develop Comprehensive Plans through Township
20 Planning Commissions.

21 The Land Use Plan provides a direction
22 for the orderly development of land uses while
23 supporting the protection of the resources of
24 Leroy Township. As you can see on Page 2, some

1 of our objectives match your impact categories
2 that will be analyzed by your Board.

3 From wanting the preservation of
4 agriculture land in Leroy Township as it relates
5 to the 1981 Right to Farm Act was written with
6 the purpose of stopping urban expansion into
7 prime agricultural land. This protects
8 farmlands and reduces conflicts between
9 incompatible uses, it prohibits industrial and
10 limits commercial land uses in classified
11 agricultural areas.

12 The pipeline located in our township is
13 a crude oil line transporting cars and oil from
14 Alberta, Canada. The heavy crude oil is diluted
15 with a toxic mix of hydrocarbons. Will the
16 trains' vibrations to the ground cause extra
17 stress on this pipeline only buried four to
18 five feet deep?

19 If the pipeline would rupture, the
20 township would not only have an oil spill but a
21 spill of highly toxic hydrocarbons which can
22 leach into our groundwater.

23 On Page 6 of our Comprehensive Land Use
24 Plan, we ask ourselves as trustees to 10

1 questions in order to evaluate a land use
2 request in our township. I will substitute the
3 word railroad for land use since that is the
4 land use request before us today.

5 Will the railroad be beneficial to the
6 general welfare, safety and health of the
7 residents in the immediate area and the general
8 population of Leroy Township? Does the railroad
9 fulfill a significant need in Leroy Township?
10 Will the railroad encourage local business
11 opportunities for the community and is
12 compatible with our area?

13 Will the railroad promote and encourage
14 a farmer friendly environment? Will the
15 railroad overburden the natural resources of
16 Leroy Township farmland, groundwater,
17 watersheds. Will the railroad adversely
18 influence living conditions due to a type of
19 pollution? Will the railroad create an
20 isolation of the special land use?

21 Will the railroad create additional
22 environmental problems due to soils, vegetation,
23 slope or flood plains? Is the subject property
24 physically suitable for the purposes of the

1 railroad? Will the railroad diminish the rural
2 character in the township?

3 Our constituents have told us that they
4 are concerned about our Board holding someone
5 else responsible for putting up gates at every
6 crossing, maintaining these gates and insisting
7 that bridges be maintained because this will
8 become an extra burden in our township for
9 township leaders with no benefits to our
10 township.

11 I ask you to deny granting GLB an
12 exemption and urge you instead to require a full
13 and vigorous Environmental Impact Study to be
14 performed. Thank you.

15 KATIE BOUGHTON: Hi. My name is Katie
16 Boughton. K-A-T-I-E B-O-U-G-H-T-O-N. My
17 husband and I would like to voice our opposition
18 to proposed Great Lakes Basin Railroad.

19 The project would be absolutely
20 devastating to prime form land and natural
21 conservancy in our community and others in the
22 Indiana, Illinois and Wisconsin area. I was
23 born and raised on a farm in Spring Township,
24 Boone County, Illinois; and my husband and I

1 have been Spring Township property owners for
2 33 years. The negative impact this project
3 would have on our county land is immeasurable.

4 Spring Township is named for the number
5 of natural springs, high water table and
6 wetlands native to the vicinity along with the
7 rare bridge black sometimes called drummer soil
8 that comprises our neighborhood farms.

9 To slash up this valuable asset with
10 rail lines is unconscionable. The negative
11 impact economically and ecologically would be
12 irreversible. Some of the detrimental impact
13 would include our neighbor's farm buildings
14 would be cut off from their farmland. So-called
15 economic growth from this project would be at
16 the expense of businessmen and women who have
17 been caretakers of this land for generations.

18 Small rural roads used to use farm
19 equipment would be closed. Anyone who has been
20 slowed by farm equipment on our county's
21 highways during the spring and fall knows that
22 to move farm machinery an extra mile or more in
23 order to circumnavigate the railroad equals time
24 and money.

1 The creation of traffic congestion at
2 railroad crossings on major roads. Changes to
3 the abundance of flora and fauna in the area.
4 We have several protected wetlands as you heard
5 earlier and misuse of some of the best crop soil
6 in the world. This soil is vital to corn and
7 soybean production.

8 Each spring we look forward to the
9 sweet sounds of the red winged black birds
10 nesting in the cattails and frogs hatching in
11 the creek nearby.

12 We urge the Surface Transportation
13 Board to hear our economic and ecological
14 concerns and deny this misuse of prime farmland.
15 Thank you.

16 MARION THORNBERRY: My name is Marion
17 Thornberry. M-A-R-I-O-N T-H-O-R-N-B-E-R-R-Y. I
18 live here in Belvidere and have for almost all
19 my life. I am legislative director for the
20 Illinois State Grange.

21 The Illinois State Grange and National
22 Grange have been in effect since 1867. They are
23 both opposed to this railroad for every reason
24 you have already heard. It's going to affect

1 everybody out there. It's going to take
2 farmland out of production and every time you
3 take an acre out of production, you are taking
4 food out of somebody's mouth. Farmers feed the
5 world and when you take the production away from
6 them, they are no longer feeding the world.

7 Safety, based on what I have seen and
8 what I have heard, they are saying 112 trains in
9 a 24-hour period. That's a train every 14 and a
10 half minutes. That means in an hour, you are
11 going to get a train every four and a third
12 minutes.

13 There is no way there is a safety
14 factor built into these because if train one
15 wrecks or derails, there is no way you can stop
16 Train 2 from hitting Train 1 after it's already
17 wrecked. I can't care how fast your
18 communication system is, it isn't going to work.

19 When you have a chemical spill or a
20 bulk oil spill, either one, you are going to
21 destroy one of the large aquifers in the United
22 States. This aquifer supplies water to McHenry
23 County, Boone County, DeKalb County and this
24 rail is going right over the top of it.

1 So if you have a train wreck and you
2 have a chemical spill or a bulk oil spill, I
3 don't care how fast your emergency response team
4 is and your haz mat response team, you can't get
5 there fast enough to save that aquifer. That
6 oil or chemical is going to sink down to that
7 waterfer and aquifer before anybody can get
8 there; and once you destroy an aquifer, if you
9 have a two-year old kid at your house, he is
10 going to be dead before it gets back to
11 production.

12 Also, another thing that upsets the
13 Grange is the fact that this rail or the
14 possibility of it was known as early as 2014 but
15 none of the public was notified. Also, our map
16 has minutes showing that this rail was discussed
17 as early as March of 2015. Again, the leaders
18 in our communities never brought it forward.

19 One of our statements under State and
20 Natural Welfare, the duty of any government is
21 the fair representation and protection of the
22 population. The Illinois State Grange believes
23 that it is the responsibility of every elected
24 official and growing government body to

1 represent their constituents to their greatest
2 ability by passing legislation that reflects the
3 views of the people, protects them and their
4 rights.

5 The government is discharging its duty.
6 That hasn't happened in Boone County. You might
7 consider that in November.

8 LISA FITZGERALD: Hi. My name is Lisa
9 Fitzgerald. L-I-S-A F-I-T-Z-G-E-R-A-L-D. I am
10 speaking to you today not only as a concerned
11 citizen for my community but actually all the
12 communities along this proposed 278-mile train
13 route. I would like to discuss some of the
14 environmental issues it will create.

15 I am urging you to not support the GLB
16 Railroad project. This project could prove to
17 be very detrimental to all farming communities
18 and very negative for all of the livelihood of
19 the people along this route.

20 We have been farming here in Boone
21 County for over 25 years which includes both
22 crops and dairy. Spring Township, as we have
23 just heard from the previous speaker, received
24 its name because of all the underground springs

1 of water and the high water table. We
2 personally even though that we farm in Spring
3 Township, my husband can be driving along the
4 field and sometimes just sink and there are no
5 maps to show where these underground springs
6 are.

7 Another concern I have is also all the
8 flooding that will -- the train tracks will
9 cause leaving our fields less productive because
10 of that.

11 Another concern I have is the
12 possibility of a hazardous material derailment,
13 which we have heard happens all the time so it's
14 not a matter of if it's going to happen, it's
15 going to be a matter of when and where along
16 this route it's going to happen.

17 The type of derailment could poison our
18 topsoil, make the topsoil useless and pollute
19 our water supply. How dangerous that would be
20 to our wells and streams. Sometimes there is an
21 evacuation as we have heard and one thing people
22 haven't heard today is what is a dairy farmer
23 going to do with our cows. We cannot move cows.
24 If this is a poisonous derailment, which if it's

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1 hazardous, it's going to be, what's going to
2 happen with our cows?

3 For example, our farm we have 60 cows
4 and we fall within five miles of the nearest
5 track. Last year our cows gave 26,800 pounds of
6 milk, each cow a year. This means they give
7 1,680,000 pounds or 186,976 gallons of milk.
8 Our milk company pays us per hundred pounds of
9 milk which can range from \$13 a hundred to up to
10 \$23 a hundred. How would we ever be fairly
11 compensated if our whole livelihood is destroyed
12 by hazardous waste? Our cows will be gone. The
13 bills will still be coming in the mail and we
14 now have no income to pay these bills.

15 So please take into consideration all
16 of the facts given to you today and
17 environmental impact. Please try utilizing
18 existing tracks that are not to capacity and try
19 repairing some of the infrastructure that needs
20 to be repaired. Thank you.

21 KERRY KENNEY: Good morning. My name
22 is Kerry Kenney. K-E-R-R-Y, K-E-N-N-E-Y. I am
23 president of the Boone County Fire District
24 No. 4. Our district is located in northeast

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1 part of Boone County. We represent
2 approximately 118 homeowners and families in a
3 30 square mile area.

4 We contract with Sharon Fire & Rescue
5 to handle the fire protection services. Sharon
6 Fire & Rescue is located just across the state
7 line in Walworth County, Wisconsin. We contact
8 with them because they are the closest fire
9 district to our community. They work hand in
10 hand with Capron Rescue who provides EMS for us.
11 This arrangement has been working well for us
12 for decades.

13 Sharon Fire & Rescue is a volunteer
14 service. They have eight trucks, 30 responders
15 who live in Wisconsin and in Illinois. There is
16 currently a rail line located in Sharon,
17 Wisconsin which the fire trucks must cross
18 before they reach a fire in our district. With
19 this proposal, there will be another track and a
20 siding track before the fire trucks could reach
21 two-thirds of our homes. The proposal is also
22 showing a road closure which would increase
23 response time to the center of our fire
24 district.

1 The proposal would drastically change
2 and has the potential to adversely affect the
3 speed and efficiency of the fire and EMS service
4 to our residents. One train of 100 cars will
5 stretch a mile long. If the train blocked three
6 roads at a time, Sharon Fire & Rescue would then
7 not be able to cross the tracks to get to our
8 homes, namely, Manchester Road, Leroy Center
9 Road and Coon Trail Road. Fire trucks would
10 have many miles to travel to get to an emergency
11 that is just across the tracks.

12 Sharon Fire & Rescue has had a train
13 accident with the current rail line that they
14 have at night. A car hit a parked train on
15 Stateline Road. The road is posted at 55 miles
16 an hour. It was night and the train car was
17 dark with no reflectors. This type of accident
18 is a preventable nightmare.

19 The water source that is used to put
20 out our fires is also located in Sharon,
21 Wisconsin so when fighting a fire, they must
22 shuttle water from town through multiple large
23 trucks. Our responders may have to cross the
24 tracks more than one time. Time is precious and

1 obstacles that can potentially increase their
2 travel time are to be avoided.

3 Another concern with the rail line is
4 the maintenance of crossing. Village of Sharon
5 has had trouble getting their gates at train
6 crossings fixed. Gate malfunction could block
7 the road for hours due to slow response from a
8 maintenance crew. This is a problem for a fire
9 truck which cannot make it through downed gates.

10 In the country, the fire truck may have
11 to back up a long way to find a location to turn
12 around. Sharon Fire & Rescue has informed us at
13 our district that the nearest Wisconsin haz mat
14 team is located in Racine or Madison, Wisconsin.
15 Each of these cities is over an hour away at
16 least if there is a spill. We have no response
17 for at least one hour.

18 We in Boone County Fire District 4 are
19 concerned that the proposed rail line will
20 adversely affect our public safety, and,
21 therefore, we ask you as a Board not to grant
22 the Great Lakes Basin Railroad an exemption but
23 instead require them into a full and rigorous
24 Environmental Impact Study. Thank you.

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1 CHARLES FRANSON: Good morning. I'd
2 like to tell you -- My name is Charles Franson.
3 C-H-A-R-L-E-S F-R-A-N-S-O-N. I live in a little
4 rural subdivision off Shattuck Road in Spring
5 Township in Belvidere here, in Boone County.
6 And I wanted you all to know that when it rains
7 and we get a decent rain, my sump pumps can run
8 every six seconds for two months at a time.

9 If that doesn't tell you that we have a
10 water table that's right at the surface through
11 this area. Now, remember, we are Spring
12 Township there. They want to run this railroad
13 right through there.

14 Now, I want to bring up a point nobody
15 has brought up before. Flint Michigan, had a
16 city water problem with lead. Now, they weren't
17 able to change their water source to what they
18 had before. If we have a derailment in Spring
19 Township and a chemical spill gets into that
20 aquifer, which I hope you seriously look into,
21 they will never clean that up within two days
22 our water source will be gone. And I don't know
23 who is going to pay for all those homes through
24 there to get city water out there from the town

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1 of Belvidere. It's going to be relied on the
2 homeowners.

3 Nobody can afford this, so I don't know
4 how this company thinks that they can just go
5 through wetlands and over an aquifer with no
6 study or impact and that it's not going to hurt
7 us. Thank you. And one other thing, Boone
8 County does not want this.

9 LOREN WILCOX: I am Loren Wilcox.
10 L-O-R-E-N, W-I-L-C-O-X. I just kind of want to
11 paint you a little picture of where I live,
12 okay. I live in Bonus Township, Garden Prairie,
13 Illinois. Built a house with my own two hands
14 about 17 years ago. We have got a beautiful
15 woods, a nice little wetland. We have a creek
16 running through our property. It's a beautiful
17 place to live.

18 I built my house 800 feet off the road
19 for a reason, so you guys wouldn't have to look
20 at it and so I wouldn't have to look at you.
21 This railroad is projected to be within 500 feet
22 of my house. It is about 200 feet from my
23 property line, not on my property so there will
24 be no compensation.

1 I really don't want to leave. I like
2 where I live and so do the people here in Boone
3 County, and we live in a rural community because
4 we want to have this privacy, we want to have
5 the community that we have and what this impact
6 is, it just greatly diminishes what we are here
7 for and, you know, I am just going to keep my
8 comments short and sweet but I have spent the
9 last 17 years building a habitat in my home, not
10 just in my home but around my home.

11 A train would decrease the value not
12 only of the property but of the value to the
13 animals and wildlife in my area. One of my
14 favorite competitions I have every year is with
15 my in-laws. They live in Boone County as well
16 and they live in a beautiful picturesque area
17 but it is almost a weekly discussion or
18 conversation of who has seen this bird, what
19 wildlife have you seen and that conversation
20 happens all the time.

21 So I'll call up my father-in-law and
22 say, well, the wood duck showed up. Have you
23 got them and he'll always say I saw them a day
24 before you, you know, of course. So, it's back

1 and forth this little banter we have about the
2 wildlife that we have in our area. And with a
3 train running through, I got to say I am
4 thinking some of it is moving away and probably
5 me. Anybody want a house in Garden Prairie?
6 All right. Thanks.

7 BYRON CANN: Hi. I am Byron Cann.
8 B-Y-R-O-N, C-A-N-N. I don't have any property
9 in the counties that are affected. I have
10 property in DeKalb County and I am an advocate
11 for agricultural use of land and of course I
12 taught for many years environmental science and
13 I am very concerned about their looking into
14 these things.

15 This reminds me of the Peotone Airport
16 and this reminds me of the Indiana tollway.
17 Here we have I think it's a private corporation
18 asking for public domain over property. It's
19 interesting that it would probably be an LLC or
20 it is an LLC and they have, what, limited
21 liability so if things derail, problems happen,
22 corporate goes bankrupt and the owners and
23 profiteers they walk off with what funds they
24 have.

1 I think that I applaud all of those
2 that spoke before I did, and I recognize all of
3 those concerns that they have. I hope that the
4 Surface Transportation meeting will deny this
5 and I don't see any positive thing. I think
6 they need to look into existing rail lines.

7 If the government needs to have
8 bypasses of hazardous material around the
9 Chicago area, they need to work with the
10 existing rail lines and work that way. That's
11 all that I have to say. Thank you.

12 KAREN TURNER: Hi. My name is Karen
13 Turner. K-A-R-E-N T-U-R-N-E-R. Okay. A lot of
14 what I was going to say was already said. I
15 have serious concern with first responders
16 getting to our area. I live in Spring Township.
17 I worry about hazardous material accidents
18 happening through derailments. The proposed
19 line will make a sharp curve near me and
20 derailments tend to happen on curves such as
21 that.

22 The natural resources that would be
23 squandered if a derailment should occur and
24 hazardous materials get in the groundwater or on

1 our soil would be devastating to our area.

2 I am a relative newcomer to Boone
3 County. I have only been here for 20 years and
4 my heart goes out to my farmer neighbors and all
5 of the people who put their heart and souls into
6 their farmland, they are fighting for their
7 livelihoods and their way of life and I hope
8 they can keep the way of life where it's been
9 for in some cases hundreds of years. Thank you.

10 ERIC ANDERBERG: Hi. Eric Anderberg.
11 E-R-I-C, A-N-D-B-E-R-B-R-G. I live in the very
12 northwest corner of DeKalb County. My family
13 farm entails Ogle, DeKalb and Boone County, and
14 to reinforce Mrs. Nystrom's point, the rail line
15 will come through Winnebago across the
16 Kishwaukee River and will wipe out a significant
17 portion of our mature oak woods.

18 So I just want to reinforce what
19 everybody said. It is correct and I don't want
20 to repeat that. I want to concentrate on one
21 thing that I think is a significant geological
22 feature that we have been have. It's the Troy
23 Bedrock Valley.

24 The Troy Bedrock Valley before the two

1 glacial periods is about 150 to 200-foot valley
2 with cliffs on each side and it's quite wide. I
3 got a -- sorry for all those in the back, but I
4 have an illustration and this is DeKalb County.

5 Back in '08, DeKalb County did a large
6 study about their water resources because of
7 encroaching development in Chicago, and so you
8 can see where the valley runs. It's really
9 where the south branch of Kishwaukee runs for
10 the most part. And what's significant about it
11 is after two glacial periods, about 300-foot up
12 to 300-foot of coarse aggregate was deposited.

13 That coarse aggregate in this area is
14 tillably permeable and what that means is the
15 groundwater -- I should back up. The Troy
16 Bedrock Valley, it's very bottom is composed of
17 dolomite and sandstone and that today is our
18 deep water aquifer. And so the Troy Bedrock
19 Valley's significance is it's a big recharging
20 area, not just for our groundwater here but for
21 the City of Chicago. And the areas to the --
22 well, the northern areas of Chicago.

23 And according to the STB and to
24 Mr. Patton himself, they mention that up to

1 6,000 different chemicals are hauled by rail and
2 in the Nystroms' farm, for example, you are
3 talking about an area that's got to maintain the
4 1 percent grade. That bed rail is going to be
5 at least 40-foot above the Kishwaukee when it
6 crosses.

7 If there was a derailment in this area,
8 anywhere in the bedrock -- in the Troy Bedrock
9 Valley, there is nothing to stop the chemicals,
10 the chemicals or any other organic compounds
11 from getting into the groundwater. It goes
12 straight down to the aquifer. That is something
13 that does not happen to the east.

14 The Troy Bedrock Valley, you can see
15 DeKalb is squared out right there, sorry for
16 those in the back again, but the chemicals will
17 go straight into the water. You cannot stop it.
18 And you can see the gray color area on the map,
19 that is where there is no stratus. It's just
20 clay or shale that exists that is not permeable.
21 The white area which is to the east which
22 includes Kane County, Kendall County and parts
23 of DeKalb, there is a shale deposit that is not
24 permeable. That's where the rail should exist.

1 This should not be drawn around DeKalb
2 County but maybe through it and up through
3 Kendall County and into McHenry and those areas
4 to stop any spills from getting into the
5 aquifer. Thank you.

6 WILLIAM RANDALL: William Randall.
7 W-I-L-L-I-A-M R-A-N-D-A-L-L. My topic is on
8 public safety. As a resident of Leroy Township,
9 Boone County, Illinois the proposed rail line
10 creates the potential delayed arrival of both
11 the Sharon Fire Department as well as the Capron
12 Rescue who provide emergency to my farm
13 residents.

14 Both the emergency service providers
15 are located on the opposite side of the proposed
16 tracks from my home, and can be significantly
17 delayed due to the proposed at-grade crossings
18 in a gate down situation. This not only impacts
19 the fire department's first responders but also
20 the tenderers that haul the water back and forth
21 from the Village of Sharon.

22 The delay in response times the rescue
23 squad may encounter can and will affect the
24 outcomes of the patients' lives as minutes

1 matter in life saving situations.

2 As an alternative to the Great Lakes
3 Basin railroad proposal, I encourage the
4 furtherance of the Chicago Region Environmental
5 and Transportation Efficiency Program, CREATE,
6 whose purpose is to increase efficiency of the
7 greater Chicago urban rail network and is
8 supported by all six of the major railroad roads
9 that pass through Chicago.

10 Human lives are more important than
11 freight of any kind. Thank you.

12 SHARON CHARLESWORTH: Hi. Sharon
13 Charlesworth. S-H-A-R-O-N
14 C-H-A-R-L-E-S-W-O-R-T-H. I am going to skip
15 some of what I had because it dealt with the
16 centennial farms and the sesquicentennial farms
17 and how eight of them are affected, but I do
18 want you to know that the railroad intersects 35
19 roads, three major highways, six streams, two
20 conservation areas and a major highland.

21 According to Frank Patton, Chief
22 Executive Officer, and Jim Wilson, president of
23 Great Lakes Basin Railroad, there is a claim of
24 economic benefit in terms of job creation. They

1 also inform us that the railroad has the
2 potential to take a million trucks off the
3 highway. The Tribune article informs us that
4 Union Pacific would be unwilling to use the
5 proposed bypass. Why? Possibly they don't want
6 to short haul their traffic; therefore, reducing
7 the amount of mileage for which they are paid.

8 There are other alternatives for
9 reducing the congestion in Chicago. A
10 possibility of an interchange in Kansas City or
11 St. Louis would be helpful. Patton says the
12 cost of the Great Lakes Basin Railroad will be
13 between 6 billion and 8 billion, however, if
14 this endeavor fails, taxpayers will be stuck
15 with the fallout.

16 If you read about the railroad industry
17 and their earnings, one will know that in the
18 fourth quarter for 2015, freight volume dropped.
19 Union Pacific furloughed 3,900 workers and put
20 1,400 locomotives in storage. Does this sound
21 like job creation for our community?

22 Our community, railroad safety. The
23 State of Illinois has the second largest rail
24 system in the nation. 134 crashes occurred at

1 public highway crossings, resulting in 55
2 personal injuries and 24 fatalities in the State
3 of Illinois during 2014. Illinois ranks second
4 in the nation in grade crossing fatalities.
5 Over 67 percent of -- 67 percent of crashes
6 occur at public grade crossings equipped with
7 active warning devices. You want to add more
8 railroad tracks to Boone County? This is the
9 future for our children? How about noise?

10 Railroad employees wear hearing
11 protection devices while riding in the trains.
12 Sound travels through a medium such as air.
13 Sound is a vibration. Sound travels fastest in
14 the manner of steel. The temperature of air
15 determines how fast sound will travel. In room
16 temperature, sound travels 344 meters per
17 second. Think of the wide open spaces in Boone
18 County. The train on the tracks and the noise
19 that it is traveling, loud, far and wide.

20 I'm sorry. I cannot see a benefit for
21 Boone County. We are an agricultural based
22 community that depends on our rural roads for
23 our rural and long lasting way of life. A
24 million trucks off the road wouldn't have an

1 impact on Boone County economically. Safety of
2 the citizens of Boone County is put at greater
3 risk due to the increase of additional railroad
4 tracks.

5 Please consider my points and those of
6 my fellow citizens. Does the Great Lakes Basin
7 Railroad improve our community? My answer is
8 no.

9 JEFF ANDERBERG: Good afternoon. My
10 name is Jeff Anderberg. J-E-F-F
11 A-N-D-E-R-B-E-R-G. My family owns a farm
12 700 acres in the DeKalb, Boone and Ogle County,
13 the only place in Illinois where four counties
14 meet at one point. Nystroms here live across
15 the road from me. I am the most northeast farm
16 in Ogle County.

17 Once thing I want to stress is what my
18 brother just related to you and the Nystroms
19 did. I have worked very hard in the 21 years
20 that I have owned my piece of property to try to
21 improve it both for the agricultural purposes
22 environmentally because of the aquifer that we
23 sit upon.

24 When I built my house in 2003, we drove

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1 a new well. I sit on no clay, no limestone.
2 278 feet of overburden of just sand and gravel,
3 right down to St. Peter sandstone, so the
4 aquifer that my brother was referring to is the
5 aquifer that if we -- the property is what
6 recharges that aquifer that Lake Forest, the
7 northern part of northern Chicago all pulls
8 their water out of.

9 I can't imagine a train having some
10 sort of environmental disaster what would happen
11 to that aquifer. Also, through my property
12 everybody turns their heat on every night when
13 it's cold. Nicor's line goes through my
14 property. That line is buried. I can tap it
15 with a tile pole. It's about four feet below
16 the surface. That line is 36 inches in
17 diameter, it runs at about 700 psi, was put in
18 in 1957.

19 The Nicor official when I tiled my farm
20 stood there all day long and watched while we
21 put tile in. He informed me he doesn't mind the
22 agricultural traffic going back and forth across
23 it but he doesn't like bulldozers and things
24 that create this bouncing motion, especially on

1 a 60-year old pipeline. I can't imagine they
2 are too happy right now with this proposal
3 because it cuts across my place, crosses the
4 line, then once it crosses Boone County, when it
5 goes through my father's place, it runs about
6 30 yards to the north side of that line.

7 I have heard all these wonderful
8 comments of all these people. My family is
9 relatively newbees to Illinois. My great
10 grandfather came here from Sweden in 1880 and
11 that's when we started farming in Illinois.

12 We all have a love for the land. We
13 all love farming. We all love our homes.
14 That's one of the things we are fighting for.
15 We all put our money, our blood, our sweat and
16 our tears for generations into this and try to
17 make this to pass it on to the next legacy.

18 I have a 20 month old son I want to
19 pass that same thing on to him. This train line
20 coming up through all this property is just
21 going to carve and destroy communities, it's
22 going to cut off roads, it's going to change the
23 way of life for thousands of people, just not
24 the property owners involved.

1 So I urge -- well, I once had an old
2 man tell me one time why we love the land and
3 it's God isn't making any more of it so I urge
4 the STB to consider all these factors and deny
5 Mr. Patton the chance to try to put a rail line
6 through all our property. Thank you.

7 STANLEY DONLEY: My name is Stanley
8 Donley. S-T-A-N-L-E-Y D-O-N-L-E-Y. Most
9 everything has been said before what I kind of
10 wanted to say but mine is somewhat you might say
11 personal to me which doesn't -- I guess for a
12 railroad doesn't mean a whole hell of a lot, but
13 I was planning on adding on to my house this
14 summer until this railroad deal came up.

15 I sit right behind a 26-acre woods
16 that's to the north of me and the railroad is
17 going to come with 150 yards of my back door
18 which takes up part of my land and it cuts
19 across my land to the south of me. Plus they
20 are adding a spur on when they go south.

21 I am thinking about retiring and I am
22 going to sit on my back porch and instead of
23 being able to watch the wildlife out my door, I
24 see trains roll by. That's not my idea of

1 retirement. Plus, I looked at the map. If you
2 look at that map, that railroad goes
3 through three or four woods, mature woods, that
4 I know of just in Leroy Township. Where is the
5 wildlife going to go that live there? Where is
6 the hunting for deer and the people that use
7 that for recreation?

8 We can't take everything away for the
9 wildlife because they got to live someplace
10 unless somebody want to start letting them live
11 in your back room. That's pretty much all I
12 have to say. Thank you.

13 KERRY LEIGH: My name is Kerry Leigh.
14 K-E-R-R-Y L-E-I-G-H. I am the Executive
15 Director of the Natural Land Institute, 3020
16 South Third Street, Rockford, Illinois. NLI is
17 a private conservation organization that has
18 been working to protect natural lands in
19 northern Illinois for more than 58 years.

20 To date, we have protected over
21 16,000 acres of land in Illinois. I am here
22 today to express our concern about the potential
23 direct, indirect and cumulative impacts to
24 biological resources from the proposed

1 construction and operation of the Great Lakes
2 Basin rail line on property owned or protected
3 by MLI and on the ecological integrity of
4 Kilbuck Creek and Kishwaukee River in DeKalb,
5 Ogle and Winnebago Counties.

6 The proposed rail line will parallel
7 I-39 to the east cutting across Kilbuck Creek
8 and several tributaries to the south branch of the
9 Kishwaukee River. Both waterways are designated
10 as highly valued aquatic resources with
11 excellent water quality and rich populations of
12 fish, mussels and other wildlife.

13 NLI has several protected properties
14 and preserves that will be indirectly affected
15 by the construction operation of the proposed
16 rail lines. Construction of a totally new rail
17 line will have significant environmental and
18 ecological impacts that could indirectly degrade
19 our preserves and damage rivers and streams
20 including Hull Creek, Kilbuck Creek and the
21 south branch of the Kishwaukee River and other
22 high quality aquatic resources.

23 It will disrupt wildlife populations,
24 destroy habitat for wildlife and pollinators and

1 stimulate additional development, especially in
2 the ecologically sensitive area south of the
3 Kishwaukee River that is the focus of the
4 Kishwaukee River Corridor Green Infrastructure
5 Plan prepared by NLI and other members of the
6 Kishwaukee River ecosystem partnership.

7 The corridors south of the Kishwaukee
8 River along I-39 between Perryville Road and
9 South Bend Road have significant natural scenic
10 and recreational resources and have been
11 targeted for development for intermodal
12 transportation systems.

13 The green infrastructure plan for this
14 area recommends land development policies, best
15 management practices for stormwater management
16 and development ordinance revisions needed to
17 protect the resources along the river. I have
18 included a copy of this in the flash drive that
19 I am submitting today. We have three
20 recommendations.

21 The scope of study for the EIS should
22 seriously evaluate the indirect impacts of
23 construction and operation. The scope of study
24 for the EIS should give serious consideration to

1 the cumulative impacts and there should be a
2 coordinated approach to mitigation of the
3 environmental impacts of the proposed rail line.
4 That includes the Army Corps of Engineers, US
5 Fish and Wildlife Service, IDNR and local forest
6 preserves and conservation districts to avoid a
7 piecemeal approach to mitigation.

8 Thank you for our consideration for our
9 comments. We will submit more detailed comments
10 and recommendations for the record.

11 PAUL LARSON: I am Paul Larson.
12 P-A-U-L, L-A-R-S-O-N. I am a former Boone
13 County Board member and my comments are my own
14 and not to be reflected on the Board in any
15 manner, shape or form, but the previous speakers
16 have covered most of the subjects.

17 I'd like to reinforce what they are
18 talking about as far as the proposed route
19 through Boone County and Winnebago County and
20 Ogle County. This route goes through the
21 Kishwaukee River Valley. This is one of the
22 highest quality rivers in the State of Illinois.

23 The conservation district, the local
24 farmers, industry and municipalities have worked

1 very hard over the years to improve the quality
2 of this river and the quality is improving as of
3 this time. There are some at-risk species that
4 have relocated into this area and are
5 reestablishing in this area.

6 When the townships and the county have
7 to do any bridge work relating to any of the
8 streams in the area, they are required to do
9 very extensive environmental impact studies,
10 even to the point of doing in stream evaluation
11 of the aquatic life that is in that stream that
12 would be affected by the bridge, therefore, any
13 disruption of the railroad would require very
14 extensive Environmental Impact Studies.

15 Also, it has been mentioned that the
16 aquifer under this entire area is a major
17 recharge area for the northwest suburbs of
18 Chicago, so there is a wide area that would be
19 affected as far as their aquifers are concerned.

20 One of the other areas that has not
21 been addressed is transportation needs as far as
22 freight. At this time, if you all look to the
23 northern Illinois, southern Wisconsin, if there
24 was a need for additional rail transportation in

1 that area, they would be improving the lines
2 that are currently there. Most of them have
3 deteriorated.

4 There used to be north/south lines in
5 Boone County. They were replaced years ago and
6 they have been replaced by farmland. As
7 recently as the past couple of years, the
8 Rockford and Boone County development have
9 looked at transloads off the current UP, that
10 would be something that could be improved.
11 Also, rail traffic coming into the Rockford
12 airport would definitely help. Thank you.

13 DENNY ELLINGSON: Hello. I am Denny
14 Ellingson. D-E-N-N-Y E-L-L-I-N-G-S-O-N. I am a
15 Boone County Board member but my thoughts and
16 statements here are Denny Ellingston's
17 statements.

18 I got a couple of comments to make that
19 I saw in general in the report and I got a
20 couple other comments as well that in the
21 statement I see there are at least four proposed
22 road closings in Boone County, and I spent a lot
23 of time watching others, working with others as
24 they look at roads in this county.

1 There are townships and governments
2 that spend time, the sheriff's department, the
3 roads departments, they all are involved in
4 whether these roads need to be opened or closed,
5 and I trust that you would not let a railroad
6 that has no familiarity with the area come in
7 and decide that we need to close this road and
8 that road because they are not necessary the way
9 they are. So if anything does come through, I
10 think it is a must that those roads stay open
11 that the county and the townships deem necessary
12 themselves.

13 Another thing that I see in that same
14 proposal is some of the roads that they look to
15 have road overcrossings on. It appears to me in
16 looking at them that many of the roads that they
17 are setting aside are roads that they think are
18 going to be cheaper bridges to build because
19 they are smaller roads, they are narrower roads,
20 they are roads that are traveled less than going
21 on the main roads where the traffic as many
22 people have talked about the safety concern of
23 some of the traffic counts as well as the bases
24 that are needed for them would make it more

1 expensive for them but if you would like traffic
2 counts or information of that sort done, I'd be
3 happy to try and help accommodate get that for
4 you.

5 The Great Lakes Basin stated purpose is
6 the one that I think most of us think about when
7 we first see it, is to get trains around Chicago
8 in a more efficient and faster way. I think as
9 they propose it, the rail from LaPorte, Indiana
10 to Rochelle, Illinois is really what does that
11 job.

12 The rail going north from Rochelle
13 through Boone County is extra form. It really
14 isn't going to change that traffic of a large
15 amount but it is going to put it in an area that
16 is very sensitive and does not need the rail.

17 If you are looking for a better place
18 to put it, I have done a little looking, too,
19 and also the much shorter course taking about
20 60 percent of the land use out of the need is to
21 take it up I-90 or alongside of I-90. It's a
22 shorter and more direct route and you could also
23 make acres less. Thank you.

24 CATHY WARD: Cathy Ward. C-A-T-H-Y

1 W-A-R-D. First of all, I want to thank all of
2 you for being here. It's -- you are truly the
3 people that I represent. I have been on the
4 Board for 14 years and a resident of Boone
5 County for 50 years and I have heard from many
6 of you and I truly, truly thank you for coming
7 today to share with this Board how the majority
8 of us in Boone County actually feel.

9 I can make this quite short and sweet I
10 think but I firmly believe that the proposed
11 freight train route through Boone County would
12 have a devastating, negative impact on the
13 financial, safety and environmental fabric of
14 our county.

15 I have been really impressed with all
16 of you people who took the time to speak today.
17 You have done a lot of research and far more
18 than I had but I know there is some very simple
19 reasons why this just does not make sense and
20 here's a few reasons, not necessarily in the
21 order of importance.

22 First of all, it means the loss of
23 about 800 acres of our prime farmland which will
24 never be recovered and this is not only Boone

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1 County's asset but the world's asset. It means
2 the loss of millions in property values on the
3 homes and the farms located near the track.

4 I have heard many people say they would
5 move. How unfortunate for all of us. It means
6 increased safety hazard in dozens of places as
7 it will cross 32 of our county crossroads
8 endangering men, women, children, pets, wild
9 animals and livestock every time a train passes
10 through.

11 It jeopardizes our tremendously
12 valuable aquifer which many of you have
13 discussed if a spill of any hazardous material
14 leaks and contaminates our water supply. It
15 endangers our precarious ecosystem balance of
16 our entire watershed area and it creates
17 continual noise pollution to any and all near
18 the route.

19 The designers of this new route may
20 believe that they now are in the paths of least
21 resistance, but I assure you that I represent
22 hundreds of you who will fight this legally,
23 politically, epically and hopefully until this
24 plan dies. Thank you very much.

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1 RON WAIT: Thank you. My name is Ron
2 Wait. W-A-I-T. Thank you. I think I know a
3 lot of you here. I used to teach and coach
4 right here in this gymnasium here.

5 For those of you who don't know, I was
6 the state legislator down in Springfield for
7 almost 30 years. In fact, I even worked with
8 our president and he was in the senate when I
9 was in the house down there, and I was also on
10 the Transportation Committee. I was either on
11 the chairman or the spokesman depending whether
12 we controlled or not. We were only controlled
13 two years so, anyway, but I think I know a
14 little bit about the transportation issues
15 because we dealt with planes, trains, buses and
16 anything that moved in the State of Illinois,
17 but I am here today to talk about because I am a
18 farmer.

19 My great, great grandparents came here
20 in 1837 and homesteaded a farm on Genoa Road out
21 here just north of DeKalb County, and this train
22 would come within a thousand feet of where our
23 land is which is still in the Wait family.

24 This -- and as it's been said here,

1 it's in Spring Township and what that means is
2 it's a very, very high water table. In fact, I
3 have been out there many times fixing tile and
4 we have some 18-20 inch tile. I think many
5 farmers here that carries a lot of water when
6 you are talking about an 18-20 inch tile and
7 that would return to swampland and wasteland if
8 we didn't have those tile.

9 And what happened when the tollway went
10 through, when the pipeline went through, we
11 still had problems with these tiles so I know
12 the trains going through it definitely would
13 negatively impact these tiles.

14 To me, it's wrong to use eminent domain
15 for private gain. This was never intended when
16 it came up with eminent domain. In fact, I
17 don't know if somebody who ever heard there was
18 a Kelo case back in 2005 in Massachusetts where
19 Pfizer wanted to take somebody's property for
20 private gain to build a gym and a hotel and it
21 was a 5 to 4 decision by the Supreme Court to
22 say, yeah, you can take it. Well, since that,
23 we have dramatically changed what you can take
24 in the State of Illinois for private gain so I

1 am not sure how that would affect this.

2 And here's the sad thing they took that
3 property from this little old lady out there,
4 now they never did develop, they moved out of
5 the area and now it's 90 acres of wasteland. So
6 taken for private gain doesn't always mean it's
7 good.

8 Also, the thing here we talked about
9 quick take and I don't know if you know what
10 that is. There is eminent and then there is a
11 quick take. Quick take means basically you can
12 come in, grab it and argue about the price of it
13 later. But what I understand is the railroads
14 do not have the right of quick take.

15 And when I was there the 30 years only
16 one time did I see it come up with the right of
17 quick take and that was for the University of
18 Illinois to take it just for one little property
19 where they wanted to expand down there, so I
20 highly doubt that the state legislature would
21 grant them the right of quick take. What that
22 means this would be three, four, how many years
23 to even try to acquire that and the good news is
24 the arguments would be fought right here in

1 Boone County.

2 And as it is said here, not only the
3 noise pollution, the vibration, air quality,
4 wildlife and we know this would affect somebody
5 within three or four miles. In fact, from our
6 farms out there, we can hear seven miles away
7 trains that go through Genoa so it definitely is
8 going to impact it and as stated here, I can see
9 it's going to devalue property 30, 40 percent
10 and of course that's never compensated for.

11 As was mentioned here earlier, we have
12 what they call a creek system and, again, that
13 was the Chicago Regional Environmental
14 Transportation Efficiency Program. I want to
15 just say there is only 23 of the 70 have been
16 implemented. Let's implement all of those
17 things and that would solve a lot of the
18 problems and we would not need to have this
19 train going through our area. Thank you.

20 MEREDITH WILLIAMS: Thank you for
21 everyone sitting and not going to the restroom
22 for the last. My name is Meredith Williams.
23 M-E-R-E-D-I-T-H W-I-L-L-I-A-M-S and the fifth
24 generation is waiting eagerly to take over the

1 farm so Randy and I can retire.

2 So we are farmers. I was a former
3 educator and now I sit on the Board of Health in
4 Boone County. My question is how will the close
5 proximity of the GLB Railroad impact the
6 Enbridge pipeline running through Boone County
7 Illinois and Rock County, Wisconsin?

8 And I am submitting two maps that
9 aren't the best, but it's all I could find
10 online of how they are within miles.

11 We are located as farmers approximately
12 a mile from the pipeline and the train runs
13 approximately a mile east of that and from my
14 understanding, it will cross over this pipeline
15 which was said earlier four to five feet under
16 the ground. I am going to read directly from an
17 article that was submitted when we were doing
18 impact studies of the wind turbine, but it does
19 refer to the problems you can have from any
20 industrial development near this pipeline.

21 The picture in this article shows that
22 they -- within two years, they were already
23 working on the pipeline to repair it. So this
24 is the information submitted to Boone County and

1 it's recorded. The professional engineers have
2 submitted expert testimony and sworn documents
3 regarding the oil pipeline. Dr. Charles Rhodes,
4 professional engineer, BS, MA Science, Ph.D.,
5 Chief Engineer of the Explain Power Company
6 recommended by the National Pipeline Safety
7 Trust. Also there is of Richard Berkowitz,
8 president of Aquifax, Pipeline Safety Engineer
9 consultant testified before the house of
10 representatives on pipeline safety, member of
11 the US Department of Transportation Technical
12 Hazards Liquid Pipeline Safety Standards and
13 37 years of experience in energy industry
14 recommended by the National Pipeline Safety
15 Trust.

16 Then there was we have a guest speaker,
17 David Kline. I'm sorry about the names.
18 Anyway, registered professional engineer in
19 Illinois, 40 years of experience in electrical
20 engineering systems. The one concern was the
21 possible leakage of crude oil, hydrocarbon
22 liquid into the groundwater from the farmland.

23 There is a protected -- cathodic
24 protection on this pipeline and it was only

1 engineered to withstand so much power --
2 current, straight current. I don't want to read
3 into all the different spills that have happened
4 but one happened in Wisconsin due to pipeline
5 installation.

6 They were there first. They did not
7 have to put the extra protection on these
8 pipelines, so it's questionable about whether
9 they would -- this would be good for this
10 pipeline. I'm sorry. I am getting nervous
11 because I saw the 30 seconds, but I do have to
12 just read this particular quote from the
13 Janesville Gazette this last Sunday and in the
14 question and answering of during the question
15 the GLB president Jim Wilson when asked the
16 question what will be the utility easement and
17 his answer was natural gas lines, fiber optic
18 lines and electrical lines. There might be six
19 lines there or there might be four lines or
20 there might be two and since we don't know how
21 far the easement has to go, if it's right next
22 to the pipeline, it's going to be close to that,
23 and it is extremely dangerous, and thank you for
24 listening and I am going to submit this

1 information and it will be a far better read by
2 them than by myself. Thank you.

3 MR. GRAVES: Ladies and gentlemen, this
4 concludes the oral comment period for our
5 meeting today. Thank you to everybody who has
6 taken time to provide comments.

7 If you'd like to provide written
8 comments as Dave indicated during his
9 presentation, you can certainly make comments on
10 the Surface Transportation Board website or mail
11 in information provided on the project brochure.

12 The comment period, as Dave indicated,
13 has been extended to June 15th and with that,
14 thank you very much for coming today and we'll
15 adjourn. Thank you.

16 A gentleman just reminded that we did
17 have a meeting location change for Rockford
18 today. So the Public Scoping meeting for the
19 meeting tonight has been moved to Ellis Academy,
20 the multi-purpose room and auditorium, on 222
21 South Central in Rockford, Illinois. It's
22 approximately 12 miles from the Cherry Valley
23 fire station which I think where the original
24 meeting was scheduled for and the meeting from

1 5:30 to 8:00 p.m. this evening. Thank you.

2 (Public comments provided orally to
3 the reporter one-on-one.)

4 BARBARA JOHNSTON: There are a few
5 things that I would like to point out that I
6 feel needs to be perfectly clear before anybody
7 can make a decision whether or not it is a good
8 idea for this railroad to come through.

9 One is I have read nowhere a projection
10 for how many tons of toxic or hazardous waste
11 will be transported across this -- through this
12 corridor. I am frightened to death about the
13 potential liability to the people in this County
14 and others will be taking on should there be
15 some sort of spill or accident.

16 The point made earlier about the
17 frequency of the traffic if one railroad has an
18 accident or a crash, there is no -- there is no
19 way to stop another train that's scheduled to be
20 coming through there 15 minutes later.

21 The water retention and recharging
22 function that is served by some of this area to
23 a highly populated area in the northwest suburbs
24 is a real problem for me. In other words, this

1 liability -- should there be a problem, this
2 liability will be long, deep and hard for the
3 people in this community.

4 The limited liability corporation that
5 seems to be asking for permission to make a
6 profit from this provision of tracks to avoid
7 Chicago, I have seen nothing that gives me any
8 faith that this LLC has the resources to stand
9 up and correct their share of the damage that
10 may occur should there be an accident or a
11 spill.

12 So I am very concerned about that. I
13 thank you very much for your time. Oh, one more
14 thing.

15 We purchased our home here in Belvidere
16 in the summer of 2005. The day we closed the
17 gas prices were \$1.99. I noticed that the
18 housing market changed dramatically the minute
19 gas prices started to go up. The property
20 values in this community have not recovered from
21 the 2007, 2008 world financial recession.

22 It seems to me that the potential for
23 comprising the value of the properties and of
24 the communities in this County because of this

4/19/2016

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1 railroad line makes me concerned about whether
2 or not these property values will ever recover
3 in my lifetime, so, thank you. My name is
4 Barbara Johnston. That is B-A-R-B-A-R-A,
5 Johnston, J-O-H-N-S-T-O-N. Thank you.

6 --oo00oo--

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that I, PAULA ANN ERICKSON, CSR, RPR, CLR and Notary Public, do hereby certify that I reported in machine shorthand the proceedings held at the Great Lakes Basin Rail Line EIS Public Scoping Meeting, on April 19, 2016 and that this transcript is a true and accurate transcription of my machine shorthand notes so taken to the best of my ability.



PAULA ERICKSON, CSR, RPR

License No. 084-003899

Dated this 4th day
of May 2016.

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