

850 West River St.
Kankakee, IL 60901

May 16, 2016

Dave Navecky – Docket #35952
Surface Transportation Board
Office of Environmental Analysis
395 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20423

Dear Mr. Navecky,

I don't have much faith that my letter will make a difference in this matter of trying to stop a man with a lot of money using eminent domain to take land from farmers in our area to build a railroad that is really not needed. But it is the only thing that I can do, so here goes.

The railroad as proposed is unnecessary – there are a lot of railroad tracks already laid on land that is not currently being farmed that could be used for his purpose. He wants to bypass the Chicago metro area. Why? Speed? Probably, but at what a cost! It is my understanding that not one railroad has signed on to this deal. Good for them – they probably realize it is not needed, very expensive and will permanently remove good soil from production.

Using eminent domain to take property for a private venture is not legal the last I heard. I am sure he thinks he can dangle dollars in front of the landowners and they will swoon and give up. He has another trick coming because these people are fighting mad and will NOT give up without a very long, expensive, physically and emotionally charged fight.

The thought of 100 trains a day traveling through the proposed area is horrible. School buses would be waiting at crossings for long periods of time. Regular traffic would be interrupted. The noise from the trains would definitely change the rural peace and quiet. All of that added to the fact that many of the farms would be divided by railroad tracks making it much harder for farmers to get to their fields for planting and harvesting and applications of herbicides and fertilizers. Some farmers would lose their homes to this ill conceived plan. The acres needed for the switching yard near Manteno is unreal. Taking that land out of production (and off the tax rolls) is simply obscene. The jobs created would not come anywhere near balancing the scales of the harm that would be done to the county.

I am urging your agency to take a long, hard look at this plan and think of all the harmful effects it would have on our local landscape. Please do not let this man get away with this land grab.

It is my understanding that most of the counties the railroad would go through are against it. I think it is time to listen to the people. I'm hoping your office is not like most government agencies appear to be – where the highest bidder gets the vote. I'm sure you know right from wrong. Please side with right; in this case – AGAINST THE GREAT LAKES BASIN RAILROAD !

Sincerely,


Barbara Jean Skelly

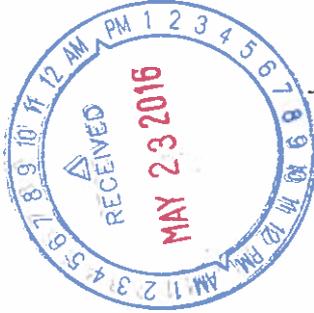


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