

Garry Junker
13785 E. 10500 N. Rd.
Grant Park, Illinois
60940
May 14, 2016

Mr. Dave Navecky
Surface Transportation Board
Office of Environmental Analysis
Washington, D.C.
20423-0001
Attention Docket Number FD 35952

Dear Mr. Novecky:

I am a resident of Grant Park in Kankakee County Illinois. My intent is to express my concerns over the proposed Great Lakes Basin Transportation LLC railroad line project—Docket number FD 35952. I oppose the project and ask the Surface Transportation Board to deny the proposal. My concerns are as follows and I ask that you not only read them but give them thought and consideration.

1. There are at least two (2) cemeteries in the footprint of the terminal of this project.
2. This line will run through a portion of Kankakee River State Park. Bald Eagles, deer, etc. will be threatened, harmed or killed by trains running through this area.
3. The Kankakee River and to my understanding three (3) other rivers will be crossed by this project. Concerning the Kankakee River, efforts have already been taken to keep it clean. Having 110 trains cross it daily certainly creates potential pollution problems.

4. Why is it that this proposed railroad is avoiding towns and cities? I think it is because Mr. Frank Patton and his associates are planning to haul hazardous materials on this line. Other railroads find it necessary to travel through towns and cities.

5. I attended a meeting Where Mr. Patton was present and was asked if hazardous materials would be hauled. His response was “a railroad cannot refuse to haul anything.”

6. This project will cross sixteen (16) roads in Kankakee County. An immediate concern is the increased time for first responders to get to an emergency. Plus certain roads will be closed or stubbed.

7. Additional road crossings from this project also create increased time needed to get to work, school, doctors, hospitals, church, shopping areas, etc.

8. The town of Grant Park in Kankakee County will be decimated by this project. Over 15,000 acres of land will be taken by this project for the terminal mostly from Grant Park. In addition 24 acres of land per mile will be taken just for the railroad itself through both of Grant Park’s townships.

9. Additionally in Grant Park one newer subdivision will be eliminated by this railroad route as well as a church. These people will not relocate in Grant Park. This will impact the schools causing a drop in student enrollment and likely the closing of the local schools due to a lower tax base and real estate taxes.

10. Mr. Patton claims this project will enhance property and home values. Ask any real estate agent and they will tell you the cheapest land and homes are near a railroad.

11. Farming is a \$1.5 billion dollar business in Kankakee County. It is estimated the yearly loss due to this project will be \$69 million dollars.

12. Mr. Patton likes to claim his project will create jobs. At a meeting in La Salle County he said it could create 25,000 jobs to build but he could not say if any of those jobs would go to the unemployed in La Salle County—I think not, because

those people would lack the skills necessary to build a railroad. He predicted maybe 250,000 jobs for the future, but—

13. Mr. Patton also said his project could take 1,000,000 trucks off the roads. Even if he creates 250,000 jobs over time there would still be 750,000 more people still looking for jobs due to trucks being taken off the roads.

14. The CREATE project is already working on the congested rail traffic problem in Chicago. Why is another project needed? Also railroad freight traffic is decreasing so why add another railroad?

15. Why not send in a technology team from Google or some other group to see if it can develop ways to solve the congestion problem in Chicago. This could protect the environment as well as preserve quality farm land.

16. A tremendous amount of topsoil will be lost in order to bring the tracks up to grade level.

17. This topsoil lost can never be replaced.

18. This project will remove some of the best land in Illinois from agricultural production.

19. As the population continues to increase how can farmers continue to meet the food needs of the people if the best ground is taken out of production.

20. The natural flow of surface water will be altered due to this project raising the grade of the land for the railroad. This will create field flooding or ponding.

21. Ponding creates breeding grounds for mosquitoes, etc.

22. The altered flow of will water will create erosion and flooding.
23. Flooding will eliminate fields from production.
24. Drainage tile will be crushed lessening the ability of surface water to be removed.
25. Land compaction due to construction will be created lessening the production capability of the land.
26. With the proposed route creating smaller fields compaction will also increase due to shorter rounds and more turns required to plant and harvest crops.
27. This project disrupts a way of life that many people depend on for food, income, etc.
28. Once land is destroyed it cannot be replaced. Land is a limited resource—it cannot be recreated once it is destroyed.
29. These trains will be travelling at 70 miles per hour setting up the possibility of derailments.
30. Derailments would allow the spillage of chemicals and hazardous materials.
31. Such spillage would allow penetration into water both on the surface and below surface level. Entrance to water below the surface would impact the drinkability of the water coming from wells .
32. The spillage would ruin more land due to the lack of containment.
33. In the event of a spill who is responsible for the cleanup and containment? Rural areas have volunteer fire departments which may not be qualified to handle such disasters.
34. Noise levels will be increased causing farm animals to produce less milk, eggs, etc.

35. Having more track crossings creates the possibility of more vehicle-train, farm equipment-train accidents.

36. Hauling of hazardous materials and chemicals can endanger the lives and health of people due to leaks, spills, etc.

37. The closing and stubbing of some roads will put more farm equipment on major roadways causing more accidents, deaths, injuries, etc. due to the differences in speed of farm equipment and vehicles such as cars and trucks.

38. Kankakee County has some other abandoned railroad property that has become a home for deer, heron, various species of birds, etc. This proposed route goes through this land.

39. Mr. Patton claims people along the route will get free electricity. He forgets to mention that the individual is responsible for bringing this electricity to his property. This is hardly free and besides more land will be taken up in the process.

40. Mr. Patton also claims people along the line can use it free or for little cost. However, he fails to mention that people are responsible for building the tracks to their property in order to access his railroad. This also takes up more land. Plus the people are allowed only minimal shipping.

41. Since no railroads have committed to using this proposed railroad—Why build it?

42. If this project is built and then abandoned—then what happens?

43. What happens if a drainage problem occurs on the railroad property? Will the railroad fix it? Will the railroad allow land owners access to its property to fix it?

44. If a problem occurs, drainage or otherwise, and to fix it requires going through the railroad bed, would this be allowed?

45. I don't wish to push this project on to some other area. However, if the intent of Mr. Patton's project is to bypass the city of Chicago, is a 278 mile railroad that takes up thousands of acres of prime farmland, causes people to lose their

homes, runs through Kankakee River State Park, crosses four (4) rivers, and disrupts two (2) cemeteries really necessary or the answer to this problem? Surely a shorter route closer to Chicago and perhaps using existing railroads or adding on to them is a better solution.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Should you wish to contact me, I can be reached at the address on the first page or by phone at 815-465-6347 or cell phone at 815-351-6347 or by email at bevngarry@airbaud.net

Thanks again,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Garry Junker". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "G".

Garry Junker

Garry + Beverly Junker
13785 E 10500 N Rd,
Grant Park, IL 60940



*Mr. Dave Navecky
Surface Transportation Board
Office of Environmental Analysis
Washington, D.C. 20423 - 0001*



ATTN: Docket number FD 35952