



City of Bedford
Office of the Mayor
Shawna M. Girgis

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January 12, 2010

Ms. Cynthia Brown
Office of Proceedings
Surface Transportation Board
395 E. Streets S. W.

Subject: Requesting a Public Hearing on Docket #AB-295-7-X

Dear Ms. Brown:

Over the past few months leaders from Lawrence County, Indiana and the surrounding area have met to discuss the potential abandonment of the rail line between Martin and Lawrence Counties.

As you know, the economic downturn has been very challenging for manufacturing communities like ours. In October 2008 the unemployment rate in Lawrence County, of which Bedford is the county seat, was 9.2% and was ranked the 4th highest county in Indiana for unemployment. This number continued to rise until the rate of unemployment reached a county high of 14.7%.

Given the economic changes and challenges our community is committed to seizing and creating new employment opportunities for local residents. One of our key strategies for a complete economic recovery includes the growth of local industry that supports Crane Naval Base. Our initial success is evident by the development of the Eastgate Business and Technology Center (former Ford/Visteon facility) that is home to defense contractors, as well as others that are located in the community. Future road construction is also planned for the Eastgate area, which will improve access and make available approximately 80 acres of land for business and industrial development.

Given these circumstances I adamantly oppose the abandonment of this rail line given the connectivity it provides to Crane and because its removal will negatively impact our ability to attract future industry. Accordingly, I am formally requesting a public hearing on the above mentioned docket.

If you have questions please feel free to contact me at sgirgis@bedford.in.us or at (812) 279-6555.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shawna M. Girgis", is written over a horizontal line.

Shawna M. Girgis
Mayor
City of Bedford

cc: Parties of record

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