

## Comments to the Surface Transportation Board

This is a list of objections and concerns regarding the proposed GLBT compiled by *Stop Great Lakes Basin Railroad* ([www.stopGLBrailroad.com](http://www.stopGLBrailroad.com)). Please feel free to modify this and add your own objections and concerns. The Surface Transportation Board (STB) looks at the impact of proposals in the categories listed. The STB wants to know the feelings of affected residents in the impacted area and considers the direct, indirect and cumulative impacts of the rail line.

This sheet will help all of us write letters and talk with our elected officials and the media. When addressing the STB please provide specifics and data to support your concerns whenever possible. Businesses and agencies are encouraged to submit written comments on letter head whenever possible. Residents should submit comments through the STB's website ([www.stb.dot.gov](http://www.stb.dot.gov)). Letters may also be sent to

**Dave Navecky**  
**Docket# FD35952**  
**Surface Transportation Board**  
**Office of Environmental Analysis**  
**395 E. Street SW**  
**Washington, DC 20423-0001**

Always refer to "Docket No. FD 35952 Great Lakes Basin Transportation Corp, LLC Project." This must be done by June 15, 2016. Government agencies should send their comments to the Chairman of the STB in as much as one of his responsibilities is to "act as its representative in relations with other governmental bodies.":

**The Honorable Daniel R. Elliott III**  
**Chairman, United States Surface Transportation Board**  
**395 E Street, SW**  
**Washington, DC 20423-0001.**

Refer to "Docket No. FD 35952 Great Lakes Basin Transportation Corp, LLC Project." This must be done by June 15, 2016. (**NOTE:** *You can see more detail about what they look at in the 16 category [especially the ones with no comments] in the "Notice of Intent" PDF. at [www.stb.dot.gov](http://www.stb.dot.gov)*) Below are some ideas to help organize submissions and focus on salient issues that are mandated to be part of the Phase 1 Environmental Impact Study.

**To:** The Surface Transportation Board  
**RE:** Docket No. FD 35952 Great Lakes Basin Transportation, Corp. LLC Project

I/ WE respectfully request that the STB deny the above referenced project for the following reasons:

### 1. Transportation Systems

- Closing of township roads impacting rural school bus routes, emergency responders, commute times, businesses
- Slow moving farm equipment will have to use more well traveled roads with rural road closings

### 2. Safety

- Increased amount of rail road crossings
- Longer response times for police, fire and ambulance vehicles due to rail-road crossings and road closures
- Increased possibility of spills and derailments with high speed rail
- Need for fire dept. extensive training and equipment to deal with large spills and derailments
- Who will bear the cost of this training and equipment
- Disrupts fire, medical personnel, police and volunteers, this will cost much extra volunteer time

### 3. Impact on Current Land Use

- Permanent destruction of prime farmland (Apprx. 6,700 acres: 20 per mile for 270 miles - plus the rail yard proposed for the Manteno area of Kankakee County)
- Large fields will be divided in smaller pieces, decreasing productivity
- Increased compaction of soils due to shorter rows
- Farm implements may be too big to use on newly created smaller fields
- Large amounts of fill are needed to build 'fly-overs' and bridges
- Livestock wandering on tracks due to poor or broken fencing
- Maintenance of the unused portion of the 200 foot wide easement?

### 4. Recreation

- Hunting as they clear cut timber for rail

### 5. Impact on Agricultural Activities (Biological Resources)

- Delays at crossings for farm machinery and equipment...this affects productivity and profits
- RR will cause land locked fields and pastures
- Increased traffic of farm equipment on more traveled roads with closure of rural roads
- Farmers will not be able to evacuate valuable life stock in case of evacuation need
- Damage to existing field tile lines
- Decreased production of crops and livestock
- Increased use of herbicides to maintain unused portions of the easement

### 6. Water Resources

- The natural grade of the land will be altered disrupting the natural flow of surface water, potentially creating artificial ponds and wetlands.
- Stagnant water will lead to issues with mosquitoes, wildlife and access to areas
- Possible ground water contamination due to spills and/or derailments



### 7. Navigation

### 8. GEOLOGY AND SOILS

- Risk permanent damage to surrounding soil, aquifers and wells with the transport of oil and chemicals
- Disturbing 24 acres, of mostly farmland, per mile of railroad track
- Compacting soil during construction
- The loss of some of the best soil in the world
- Bridges built over 4 major rivers and impact on bluffs
- Fill materials needed to make the grade

### 9. Air Quality and Climate

- Idling vehicles waiting at grade crossings

### 10. Noise & Vibration

- Increased noise and vibration levels both day and night. Two tracks would be able to handle 110 trains (not cars, trains!) per day. One train every 13 minutes

### 11. Energy Resources

### 12. Economic & Socioeconomic

- 24 acres per mile of railroad will be taken out of production forever, causing loss of farm income for current and all future farm owners.
- Over 6,700 acres of easements land taken and 15,000 acre rail terminal near Manteno, IL in Kankakee County
- Limits use of bordering land
- Decreased land values for surrounding properties resulting in a lower tax base and less real estate taxes
- There are risk factors associated with a privately funded company taking on this huge project
- This is not a company with a proven track record building railroads
- What happens if they run out of money
- What happens if the company is not profitable
- Future maintenance issues

### 13. Cultural & Historic Significance and/or Resources

### 14. Aesthetics

- Clear cut trees, raised rail beds, bluffs along IL river

### 15. Environmental Justice

### 16. Cumulative Impacts

- People in this township are living here because of the rural environment
- Destroy that and people might be forced to go elsewhere
- Permanent destruction of valuable soils
- Township roads will be altered or closed - a tremendous inconvenience
- It degrades the rural nature of the historic countryside

### Additional Issues

- One of the main reasons that the Notice of Intent gives as the need for this is the congestion in the Chicago terminal. It says delays "can be up to 30 Hours." This line can decrease this to 8 hours.
- This new line merely allows the rail shippers to get their product to their destination quicker which results in more profit for the shipper. Since when can eminent domain (the taking of private property for public use) be used to generate more corporate profits?
- Suggest that the terminal allow Google to send in a team to determine how technology can be used to make the terminal more efficient. They are currently developing cars that drive themselves. Google is an organization that has concerns for the environment. They can help save precious needed farm land and can help preserve the peace and tranquility of the country.
- The inefficiencies of the Chicago train terminal should not be solved by creating a problem in the countryside. C.R.E.A.T.E. is already working on congestion and is a combined effort of many.
- The Notice of Intent states that "the Board must approve a construction request unless it finds that the construction is inconsistent with the public convenience and necessity." Convenience and necessity should be stressed in the issues.