

Surface Transportation Board
Attn.: Dave Navecky
395 E Street SW
Washington, DC 20423-0001

Docket No. FD 35952

As Vice-President and Legislative Affairs Chairman of the LaSalle County Farm Bureau I am compelled to comment on the Great Lakes Basin Transportation Inc. (GLBT) proposal to build a private rail line from Milton WI to La Porte IN. This proposed corridor will impact communities, businesses and farms along its entire route. Transportation systems will be disrupted, emergency services will be slowed, and land use will be forever altered. Important drainage systems will be altered and subjected to increased erosion, runoff, and contamination. The corridor will not absorb and filter rainfall like farmland, forests, and pastureland. The corridor will instead seek to move water off of its property as quickly as possible.

Of great concern is GLBT's desire for eminent domain rights. They are not asking for a dual track right of way but six tracks and a large utility easement. This proposal does not have the support of local communities or any of the railroads that would utilize their line to bypass Chicago. This makes one wonder if their real desire is to obtain this right of way for uses other than a rail bypass around Chicago. The ability to bypass Chicago via the BNSF and NS interchange at Streator IL already exists. Upgrading the NS line to dual track east from Streator would require little if any new right of way or environmental impacts. The major railroads using the Chicago corridor have been working together for years to address the Chicago congestion. They continue to upgrade their infrastructure. Much of the rail traffic needs to go to or come from Chicago.

Our LaSalle County Farm Bureau board of directors has adopted a resolution opposing the rail line. We urge you to take into consideration the above factors that would impact the safety, health and economic wellbeing of the people in the proposed corridor. We feel the environmental impacts far outweigh any economic benefits which are unproven and suspect.

Sincerely,
David Isermann