



Amy Loudenbeck

REPRESENTING WISCONSIN'S 31ST ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

September 28, 2016

Victoria Ruston
Director, Office of Environmental Analysis
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20432-0001

Re: Docket No. FD 35952 Great Lakes Basin Transportation, Inc.

Dear Director Ruston:

On September 20, 2016, Great Lakes Basin Transportation, Inc. (GLBT) filed their Response to the Surface Transportation Board's (STB) July 1, 2016 Information Request No. 1. This response was both extensive and comprehensive, and it included a number of significant substantive changes from the GLBT's initial filing with the STB.

Most significantly, the GLBT has adopted a new Preferred Route that will significantly impact communities and residents along this new Preferred Route.

I am concerned that many landowners who may be adversely impacted by this new Preferred Route are just now learning about the project and did not provide public comment during the initial Scoping Process. For example, during a recent Town Board meeting in the Town of Beloit, a community not impacted by the GLBT's previous Preferred Route, more than forty residents appeared to voice their opposition to the new Preferred Route. Many of the residents expressed frustration that they were unaware of the possibility of the proposed rail line being re-routed through their community.

The new Preferred Route was submitted by the GLBT and disclosed to the public after the close of the initial public comment period. **In order to ensure both procedural fairness under National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and to have an informed public, I respectfully request that a new public comment period be set specifically for GLBT's Response to the STB's Information Request No. 1.** Without this public comment period, it is possible that individuals and communities impacted by the biggest rail construction project in more than a century will not be allowed to provide comment until the draft environmental impact statement is released years in the future. **I request that the STB allow a minimum 60-day public comment period on the GLBT's Response to information Request No. 1 to ensure that the newly impacted landowners have an opportunity to provide their input regarding potential environmental, social, and economic impacts of the new Preferred Route.**

Respectfully,

Representative Amy Loudenbeck
31st District
Wisconsin State Assembly