



# Amy Loudenbeck

REPRESENTING WISCONSIN'S 31<sup>ST</sup> ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

March 1, 2017

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 December 1, 2016 Great Lakes Basin Transportation, Inc. (GLBT) requested the Surface Transportation Board (STB) grant a “*temporary suspension of the environmental review process*,” which the STB granted until February 28, 2017. In a follow-up correspondence dated February 28, 2017, the GLBT requested an extension to the suspension of the environmental review process by the Office of Environmental Assistance until April 30, 2017 because of ongoing “*discussions with potential customers, shippers, and other parties who may file statements in support of the application*.”

While I understand that granting GLBT’s requested extension may be a formality at this point in the process, I am disappointed in the applicant’s apparent lack of progress on a formal submission to the STB more than a year after filing their Notice of Intent. As the GLBT further drags out the environmental review process, homeowners, farmers, and communities within the right-of-way along the 278-mile route remain in a constant state of disruption due to the potential impacts on their property and lives.

Based on the lack of progress on a formal submission by GLBT and the fact that they are still engaging with “*potential customers, shippers, and other parties*,” it appears that their filing a Notice of Intent was significantly premature. Last June, I submitted 9-pages of written comments on the Draft Scope of Study for an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). In these comments, I shared my concerns over the viability of this project compared to the impacts on residents along the proposed rail corridor:

“The developers of the proposal have claimed the project will cost in excess of \$8 billion on planning, development, land acquisition, and construction. This is an \$8 billion wager on a redundant project that impacts the lives of thousands of residents and will irreversibly alter the landscape of dozens of communities across three states in order to save a few hours of time that freight sits in the Chicago railyards. The CREATE project in Chicago has the same purpose as the GLB ROW, and it is already investing billions of dollars to achieve significant reductions in the average time it takes a train to get through Chicago. The redundancy of this project is exemplified by the fact that two of the nation’s largest rail companies have taken public positions in opposition to the project. Their opposition, and the fact that none of the other major rail companies have



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publicly endorsed the project, leaves the very real possibility that the developers are building a 278-mile rail line that will be under-utilized from its inception.”

It appears as though my concerns over this project were not only well founded, but may have actually been understated. After more than a year, GLBT is still searching for potential customers and rail companies that will use their rail line in order to justify their proposal.

I know how seriously the Surface Transportation Board takes their environmental review responsibilities. I look forward to your response to GLBT on their request, and a full, formal review of this proposed project.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amy Loudenbeck". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "A".

Representative Amy Loudenbeck  
31<sup>st</sup> District  
Wisconsin State Assembly