

COUNTY - PORTER



HIGHWAY ENGINEERING

ROADS • BRIDGES • DRAINAGE
1955 SOUTH STATE ROAD 2
VALPARAISO, INDIANA 46385

D. W. SCHELLING, P.E.
COUNTY ENGINEER

L. D. SIMPSON
ASSISTANT COUNTY ENGINEER

R. D. RIDDELL
FIELD OPERATIONS ENGINEER

C. F. ALBERTSON
UTILITIES INSPECTOR

(219) 465-3574

FAX: (219) 465-3569

December 5, 2003

Natalie S. Rosenberg, Counsel
CSX Transportation, Law Department
500 Water Street, Speed Code J-150
Jacksonville, Fla 32202

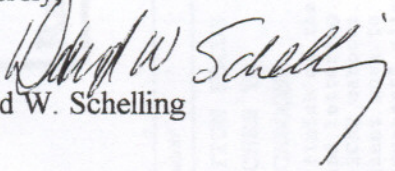
Re: STB Docket No. AB-55 (Sub-No. 643X), CSX Transportation, Inc.
Abandonment in LaPorte, Porter and Starke Counties, Indiana

Dear Ms. Rosenberg:

Porter County feels that it is unfortunate that CSX Transportation is looking at abandonment of the rail lines between LaCrosse to Wellsboro and between North Judson to Malden in the above mentioned Indiana Counties. The Malden location in Porter County is also the location of the LaPorte County Farm Bureau Co-Op. Farming is a very important part of Porter County economy and the closure of this railroad line would certainly have an adverse affect on the local quality of life. The transfer from railcars to motor carrier will greatly increase the heavy loads on the two lane highways in this area. I understand that each grain railcar is equal to 3 1/3 semi trucks and fertilizer and hydrous ammonia is equal to 4 trucks. This would likely result in an additional 1400 trucks on the highways in this area. This will definitely affect SR 49 and other roads. I have no personal knowledge of the Co-Op operation. The docket dated October 31, 2003 indicates a decrease in railcars for 2003, but it should be noted that the year has not ended yet and the soy bean crop yield was very low this year.

It should be pointed out that there is the Hoosier Valley Railroad Museum, Inc. in North Judson. This organization purchased property in January 24, 1997 to have a connection to the outside world. This property evidently connects to the tracks that are proposed for abandonment. Enclosed is a newsletter from 1997 that discusses that issue. Perhaps a local agency in Stark County could request STP Transportation Enhancement Federal funds to help this museum. It is out of our jurisdiction. Please consider keeping both tracks active.

Sincerely,


David W. Schelling

cc: Commissioners, Vernon A. Williams, Tom Beck, file