

4.0 COORDINATION AND CONSULTATION

4.1 Public Involvement

Public meetings for the project will be held on October 5th, 2009 in Joliet and October 7th, 2009 in Springfield, IL. Public comments and concerns will be solicited at these meetings, which will be reported in future drafts of this document.

A website (www.idothisr.org) was initiated on September 21, 2009 and will be used to inform the public and to gain public comments.

4.2 Coordination Letters

The following section contains coordination letters and when available the response letter.



Illinois Department of Transportation

Division of Public and Intermodal Transportation
100 West Randolph Street / Suite 6-600 / Chicago, Illinois / 60601

September 1, 2009

Mr. Ramon Munoz-Raskin
Transportation Industry Analyst
Office of Railroad Development/ Passenger and Freight Programs
US Department of Transportation, Federal Railroad Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E.
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Mr. Munoz-Raskin:

In fulfillment of the requirements discussed in our telephone conference of Monday, August 31, 2009, the Illinois Department of Transportation is submitting the attached documentation of continuing progress on implementing the project authorized under the 2004 ROD (http://www.fra.dot.gov/downloads/rrdev/chi-stlouis_rod.pdf) for the Illinois HSR corridor from Chicago to St. Louis. As you know, there are five elements to our HSR corridor project - Track, Train, Signal, Road Crossings and Stations – and we have been advancing work on various aspects of these elements. I trust that the attached listing provides sufficient evidence that our efforts have been on-going and that it is acceptable for a determination that the 2004 ROD can be defined as active.

Please notify me as soon as possible whether you have questions or need further information. Thank you in advance for your consideration. We look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'George Weber', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

George Weber
Chief
Bureau of Railroads

Cc: David Valenstein

Progress on the Chicago to St. Louis Corridor for purposes of implementing HSR

- EIS signed 1/2003
- ROD signed 1/2004
- NAJPTC contract LM\Amtrak\AAR\FRA\IDOT\UPRR 6/2002-3/2007
This was a coordinated effort to design a PTC system that would allow 110 mph passenger service and normal speed freight service. Effort could not meet goal and was terminated.
- Track Upgrades Springfield-Mazonia IDOT\UPRR 3/2001-12/2005
IDOT spent \$50 million to rehabilitate the single track main to 110 mph standards to accommodate proposed PTC area mentioned above.
- 4-Quad Grade Crossing Installation IDOT\ILCC 3/2001-12/2005
The Illinois Commerce Commission provided \$16 million Dollars to convert the public road crossing in the PTC area to 4-quad gates with vehicle detection.
- Private Crossing Gate Installations IDOT\UPRR 3/2001-12/2005
IDOT spent \$3 million to install flashing lights and gates to all private crossings in the PTC area
- Perform Actual 110 mph HSR test LM\Amtrak\AAR\FRA\IDOT\UPRR 10/2002
- CTC proposed & installed portions to accept PTC IDOT\UPRR\Amtrak 2005-Current
In the event of PTC failure CTC has been installed as an underlying signal system in areas not equipped.
- Cab Signals to replace NJPTC option IDOT\UPRR\Amtrak 3/2007-3/2009
After determining the PTC could not meet FRA's requirements, IDOT developed a plan to use cab signals. FRA awards funds for installation; system revision precludes use of funds.
- ITCS for Grade Crossing communications IDOT\UPRR\Amtrak 12/2006-Current
UPRR is currently installing ITCS on road crossings from Springfield to Dwight in anticipation of HSR (cost-to-date not known)
- Computer train modeling to update original assumptions IDOT\UPRR 2007/2008/2009
IDOT funded RTC modeling for UPRR to update the old train modeling data presented in the original EIS thereby precisely identifying train meet points and verify scheduling.
- Install HSR track in Springfield, IL as part of corridor UPRR 10/2008-12/2008
UPRR spent \$5 million to rehabilitate the single main through the Springfield to prepare for the HSR project.
- Upgrade UPRR track geometry car and monitor corridor IDOT\UPRR 2005-Current
IDOT spent \$1.5 million to equip UPRR geometry cars for HSR track and RQ monitoring,
- Rebuild downtown Atlanta, IL to accommodate HSR curve IDOT\UPRR 3/2001-11/2004
IDOT spent \$1 million to rebuild the track through downtown Atlanta, IL to accommodate HSR trains (this was a permanent 45 mph restriction previously)
- Award of Federal funds to continue HSR corridor work 6/2002-Current
NAJPTC funds, Intercity Passenger Assistance grants
- Station development planning to prepare for HSR service 2006-Current
Normal Intermodal Station design/engineering ; Springfield rehab plan



Illinois Department of Transportation

Division of Public and Intermodal Transportation

100 West Randolph Street / Suite 6-600 / Chicago, Illinois / 60601

September 11, 2009

Ms. Janet M. Odeshoo
Federal Emergency Management Agency Region 5
Deputy Regional Administrator
536 South Clark St., 6th Floor
Chicago, IL 60605

Dear Ms. Odeshoo:

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), in cooperation with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) is initiating the information gathering phase of the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed improvements included in the Chicago to St. Louis High-Speed Rail Project. Because the project may affect your area of expertise, your facilities, or your activities or programs, we are seeking your comments on this project.

This project, which is part of the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative, proposes to add high-speed passenger rail service between Chicago, Illinois and St. Louis, Missouri. Initially, the service will include three round-trip passenger trains operating at a maximum speed of 110 miles per hour (mph) and one at a maximum speed of 79 mph between Joliet and St. Louis. On completion of all improvements envisioned for the line from Joliet to St. Louis, the expected service plan is to operate five round-trips per day at a maximum speed of 110 mph.

The proposed passenger rail service would cross the Mississippi River from East St. Louis, Illinois to St. Louis, Missouri on the MacArthur Bridge. Work on this bridge, if any, would be limited to track and/or tie replacement. The project is shown in the attached figure.

In Illinois, the project will rehabilitate roadbed; replace ties, rail and ballast; and install or upgrade train signaling where necessary. It is anticipated that the vast majority of construction activities, including staging areas, will be within existing railroad rights-of-way. Work done outside of the railroad right-of-way includes minor ditching, bridge, culvert and station work.

The development of high speed rail within this corridor was first studied in 1979. In 1992 the Secretary of Transportation designated the Chicago-St. Louis line as part of the "Chicago Hub Network" high-speed rail corridor. This led to a Financial and Implementation Plan (May 1994) and the concept and corridor were validated in the commercial feasibility study released by the FRA, High-Speed Ground Transportation for America (August 1996). A Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Chicago-St. Louis High Speed Rail Project was issued in January 2003, followed by inclusion as a key component in the Midwest Regional Rail System report in September 2004. The Record of Decision (ROD) on the EIS for the Chicago-St. Louis HSR Project was executed on January 8, 2004.

The comments and material you supply will be used to determine if the proposed improvements may have impacts that warrant further consideration and are consistent with future long-term development plans within the study corridor. Your comments will be incorporated into the environmental planning process and Environmental Assessment document as appropriate. We ask that you provide your agency's comments by September 18, 2009.

This Tier 1 EA is identified by FRA as an essential first step in the development of an intercity passenger rail corridor. The focus of the Tier 1 EA will be on establishing purpose and need, estimating ridership, selection of the preferred corridor, identifying the station stops, specifying the service levels, defining the type of operations, and identifying the logical next phases. The specific construction activities would be evaluated in subsequent Tier 2 NEPA documents.

This Tier 1 EA is needed to complete a Track 2 application for a High-Speed Intercity Rail Program (HSIRP) grant. On April 16, 2009, President Obama, together with Vice President Biden and Secretary of Transportation LaHood, announced a new vision for developing high-speed rail in America. They called for a collaborative effort among the Federal Government, States, railroads, and other key stakeholders to help transform America's transportation system through a national network of high-speed rail corridors. This notice builds on this "Vision for High-Speed Rail" (available on FRA's Web site) by detailing the application requirements and procedures for obtaining funding for high-speed and intercity passenger rail projects under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) and the Department of Transportation Appropriations Acts of 2008 and 2009 (FY 2008/2009 DOT Appropriations Act), while laying the foundation for a longer-term program to establish a network of high-speed rail corridors.

The enclosed information should help you understand the nature of the project and location of the proposed railway improvement. Because this effort is part of an ARRA grant application, we are operating under an accelerated schedule and would appreciate comments by September 18, 2009.

If you have any questions about the project, please do not hesitate to contact Barbara Stevens at (217) 785-4245, or by email at Barbara.Stevens@Illinois.gov.

The Illinois Department of Transportation thanks you in advance for your prompt review and responses to our request for comments.

Sincerely,



George Weber
Bureau of Railroads, Bureau Chief

Enclosures:
Project Overview
Map of Project Limits

cc: Barbara Stevens – IDOT, Bureau of Design and Environment
Tim Selover, Phil Pasterak – Parsons Brinckerhoff



Illinois Department of Transportation

Division of Public and Intermodal Transportation

100 West Randolph Street / Suite 6-600 / Chicago, Illinois / 60601

September 11, 2009

Ms. Marisol R. Simon
Federal Transit Administration
Regional Administrator Region 5
200 W. Adams Street, Suite 320
Chicago, IL 60606

Dear Ms. Simon:

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Tim Selover, Phil Pasterak – Parsons Brinckerhoff



Illinois Department of Transportation

Division of Public and Intermodal Transportation

100 West Randolph Street / Suite 6-600 / Chicago, Illinois / 60601

September 11, 2009

Mr. Nick Chevance
National Park Service
Environmental Coordinator Planning and Compliance Office
601 Riverfront Dr.
Omaha, NE 68102-4226

Dear Mr. Chevance:

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), in cooperation with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) is initiating the information gathering phase of the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed improvements included in the Chicago to St. Louis High-Speed Rail Project. Because the project may affect your area of expertise, your facilities, or your activities or programs, we are seeking your comments on this project.

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George Weber
Bureau of Railroads, Bureau Chief

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Tim Selover, Phil Pasterak – Parsons Brinckerhoff



Illinois Department of Transportation

Division of Public and Intermodal Transportation

100 West Randolph Street / Suite 6-600 / Chicago, Illinois / 60601

September 11, 2009

Mr. Keith McMullin
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
St. Louis District
1222 Spruce Street
St. Louis, MO 63103-2833

Dear Mr. McMullin:

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The Illinois Department of Transportation thanks you in advance for your prompt review and responses to our request for comments.

Sincerely,



George Weber
Bureau of Railroads, Bureau Chief

Enclosures:
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Map of Project Limits

cc: Barbara Stevens – IDOT, Bureau of Design and Environment
Tim Selover, Phil Pasterak – Parsons Brinckerhoff



Illinois Department of Transportation

Division of Public and Intermodal Transportation

100 West Randolph Street / Suite 6-600 / Chicago, Illinois / 60601

September 11, 2009

Mr. Mitch Isoe
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Chicago District
111 North Canal Street, Suite 600
Chicago, IL 60606

Dear Mr. Isoe:

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), in cooperation with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) is initiating the information gathering phase of the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed improvements included in the Chicago to St. Louis High-Speed Rail Project. Because the project may affect your area of expertise, your facilities, or your activities or programs, we are seeking your comments on this project.

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George Weber
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Tim Selover, Phil Pasterak – Parsons Brinckerhoff



Illinois Department of Transportation

Division of Public and Intermodal Transportation

100 West Randolph Street / Suite 6-600 / Chicago, Illinois / 60601

September 11, 2009

Mr. John Betker
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Rock Island District
1500 Rock Island Dr
Rock Island, Illinois 61299

Dear Mr. Betker:

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), in cooperation with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) is initiating the information gathering phase of the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed improvements included in the Chicago to St. Louis High-Speed Rail Project. Because the project may affect your area of expertise, your facilities, or your activities or programs, we are seeking your comments on this project.

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Illinois Department of Transportation

Division of Public and Intermodal Transportation

100 West Randolph Street / Suite 6-600 / Chicago, Illinois / 60601

September 11, 2009

Mr. Douglas D. Leavell
US Coast Guard St. Louis Regional Office
1222 Spruce Street
Saint Louis, MO 63101

Dear Mr. Leavell:

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), in cooperation with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) is initiating the information gathering phase of the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed improvements included in the Chicago to St. Louis High-Speed Rail Project. Because the project may affect your area of expertise, your facilities, or your activities or programs, we are seeking your comments on this project.

This project, which is part of the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative, proposes to add high-speed passenger rail service between Chicago, Illinois and St. Louis, Missouri. Initially, the service will include three round-trip passenger trains operating at a maximum speed of 110 miles per hour (mph) and one at a maximum speed of 79 mph between Joliet and St. Louis. On completion of all improvements envisioned for the line from Joliet to St. Louis, the expected service plan is to operate five round-trips per day at a maximum speed of 110 mph.

The proposed passenger rail service would cross the Mississippi River from East St. Louis, Illinois to St. Louis, Missouri on the MacArthur Bridge. Work on this bridge, if any, would be limited to track and/or tie replacement. The project is shown in the attached figure.

In Illinois, the project will rehabilitate roadbed; replace ties, rail and ballast; and install or upgrade train signaling where necessary. It is anticipated that the vast majority of construction activities, including staging areas, will be within existing railroad rights-of-way. Work done outside of the railroad right-of-way includes minor ditching, bridge, culvert and station work.

The development of high speed rail within this corridor was first studied in 1979. In 1992 the Secretary of Transportation designated the Chicago-St. Louis line as part of the "Chicago Hub Network" high-speed rail corridor. This led to a Financial and Implementation Plan (May 1994) and the concept and corridor were validated in the commercial feasibility study released by the FRA, High-Speed Ground Transportation for America (August 1996). A Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Chicago-St. Louis High Speed Rail Project was issued in January 2003, followed by inclusion as a key component in the Midwest Regional Rail System report in September 2004. The Record of Decision (ROD) on the EIS for the Chicago-St. Louis HSR Project was executed on January 8, 2004.

The comments and material you supply will be used to determine if the proposed improvements may have impacts that warrant further consideration and are consistent with future long-term development plans within the study corridor. Your comments will be incorporated into the environmental planning process and Environmental Assessment document as appropriate. We ask that you provide your agency's comments by September 18, 2009.

This Tier 1 EA is identified by FRA as an essential first step in the development of an intercity passenger rail corridor. The focus of the Tier 1 EA will be on establishing purpose and need, estimating ridership, selection of the preferred corridor, identifying the station stops, specifying the service levels, defining the type of operations, and identifying the logical next phases. The specific construction activities would be evaluated in subsequent Tier 2 NEPA documents.

This Tier 1 EA is needed to complete a Track 2 application for a High-Speed Intercity Rail Program (HSIRP) grant. On April 16, 2009, President Obama, together with Vice President Biden and Secretary of Transportation LaHood, announced a new vision for developing high-speed rail in America. They called for a collaborative effort among the Federal Government, States, railroads, and other key stakeholders to help transform America's transportation system through a national network of high-speed rail corridors. This notice builds on this "Vision for High-Speed Rail" (available on FRA's Web site) by detailing the application requirements and procedures for obtaining funding for high-speed and intercity passenger rail projects under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) and the Department of Transportation Appropriations Acts of 2008 and 2009 (FY 2008/2009 DOT Appropriations Act), while laying the foundation for a longer-term program to establish a network of high-speed rail corridors.

The enclosed information should help you understand the nature of the project and location of the proposed railway improvement. Because this effort is part of an ARRA grant application, we are operating under an accelerated schedule and would appreciate comments by September 18, 2009.

If you have any questions about the project, please do not hesitate to contact Barbara Stevens at (217) 785-4245, or by email at Barbara.Stevens@Illinois.gov.

The Illinois Department of Transportation thanks you in advance for your prompt review and responses to our request for comments.

Sincerely,



George Weber
Bureau of Railroads, Bureau Chief

Enclosures:
Project Overview
Map of Project Limits

cc: Barbara Stevens – IDOT, Bureau of Design and Environment
Tim Selover, Phil Pasterak – Parsons Brinckerhoff



Illinois Department of Transportation

Division of Public and Intermodal Transportation

100 West Randolph Street / Suite 6-600 / Chicago, Illinois / 60601

September 11, 2009

Ms. Diane Howser
US Coast Guard
16W215 83rd Street, Suite D
Burr Ridge, IL 60527

Dear Ms. Howser:

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), in cooperation with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) is initiating the information gathering phase of the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed improvements included in the Chicago to St. Louis High-Speed Rail Project. Because the project may affect your area of expertise, your facilities, or your activities or programs, we are seeking your comments on this project.

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Bureau of Railroads, Bureau Chief

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Tim Selover, Phil Pasterak – Parsons Brinckerhoff



Illinois Department of Transportation

Division of Public and Intermodal Transportation

100 West Randolph Street / Suite 6-600 / Chicago, Illinois / 60601

September 11, 2009

Mr. Peter V. Neffenger
Rear Admiral
U.S. Coast Guard
Ninth Coast Guard District
1240 East 9th Street
Cleveland, OH 44199-2060

Dear Mr. Neffenger:

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), in cooperation with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) is initiating the information gathering phase of the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed improvements included in the Chicago to St. Louis High-Speed Rail Project. Because the project may affect your area of expertise, your facilities, or your activities or programs, we are seeking your comments on this project.

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George Weber
Bureau of Railroads, Bureau Chief

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Tim Selover, Phil Pasterak – Parsons Brinckerhoff



Illinois Department of Transportation

Division of Public and Intermodal Transportation

100 West Randolph Street / Suite 6-600 / Chicago, Illinois / 60601

September 11, 2009

Mr. James Johnson
U.S. Department of Agriculture
State Conservationist
2118 W. Park Court
Champaign, IL 61821

Dear Mr. Johnson:

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), in cooperation with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) is initiating the information gathering phase of the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed improvements included in the Chicago to St. Louis High-Speed Rail Project. Because the project may affect your area of expertise, your facilities, or your activities or programs, we are seeking your comments on this project.

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George Weber
Bureau of Railroads, Bureau Chief

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cc: Barbara Stevens – IDOT, Bureau of Design and Environment
Tim Selover, Phil Pasterak – Parsons Brinckerhoff



Illinois Department of Transportation

Division of Public and Intermodal Transportation

100 West Randolph Street / Suite 6-600 / Chicago, Illinois / 60601

September 11, 2009

Ms. Beverly Bishop
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Deputy Regional Director
Ralph Metcalfe Federal Building
77 West Jackson Blvd.
Chicago, IL 60604-3507

Dear Ms. Bishop:

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), in cooperation with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) is initiating the information gathering phase of the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed improvements included in the Chicago to St. Louis High-Speed Rail Project. Because the project may affect your area of expertise, your facilities, or your activities or programs, we are seeking your comments on this project.

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George Weber
Bureau of Railroads, Bureau Chief

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Tim Selover, Phil Pasterak – Parsons Brinckerhoff



Illinois Department of Transportation

Division of Public and Intermodal Transportation

100 West Randolph Street / Suite 6-600 / Chicago, Illinois / 60601

September 11, 2009

Ms. Marisol R. Simon
Federal Transit Administration
Regional Administrator Region 5
200 W. Adams Street, Suite 320
Chicago, IL 60606

Dear Ms. Simon:

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), in cooperation with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) is initiating the information gathering phase of the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed improvements included in the Chicago to St. Louis High-Speed Rail Project. Because the project may affect your area of expertise, your facilities, or your activities or programs, we are seeking your comments on this project.

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Bureau of Railroads, Bureau Chief

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Tim Selover, Phil Pasterak – Parsons Brinckerhoff



Illinois Department of Transportation

Division of Public and Intermodal Transportation

100 West Randolph Street / Suite 6-600 / Chicago, Illinois / 60601

September 11, 2009

Mr. Ken Westlake
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
US EPA Region 5
77 West Jackson Boulevard
Chicago, IL 60604

Dear Mr. Westlake:

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Illinois Department of Transportation

Division of Public and Intermodal Transportation

100 West Randolph Street / Suite 6-600 / Chicago, Illinois / 60601

September 11, 2009

William W. Rice
U. S. Environmental Protection Agency
US EPA Region 7
901 N. 5th Street
Kansas City, KS 66101

Dear Mr. Rice:

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Sincerely,



George Weber
Bureau of Railroads, Bureau Chief

Enclosures:
Project Overview
Map of Project Limits

cc: Barbara Stevens – IDOT, Bureau of Design and Environment



Illinois Department of Transportation

Division of Public and Intermodal Transportation

100 West Randolph Street / Suite 6-600 / Chicago, Illinois / 60601

September 11, 2009

Ms. Cathy Pollack
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
1250 S. Grove Street, Suite 103
Barrington, IL 60010

Dear Ms. Pollack:

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), in cooperation with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) is initiating the information gathering phase of the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed improvements included in the Chicago to St. Louis High-Speed Rail Project. Because the project may affect your area of expertise, your facilities, or your activities or programs, we are seeking your comments on this project.

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Tim Selover, Phil Pasterak – Parsons Brinckerhoff



Illinois Department of Transportation

Division of Public and Intermodal Transportation

100 West Randolph Street / Suite 6-600 / Chicago, Illinois / 60601

September 11, 2009

Mr. Douglas P. Scott
Illinois Environmental Protection Agency
Director
P.O. Box 19276
Springfield, IL 62794-9276

Dear Mr. Scott:

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), in cooperation with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) is initiating the information gathering phase of the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed improvements included in the Chicago to St. Louis High-Speed Rail Project. Because the project may affect your area of expertise, your facilities, or your activities or programs, we are seeking your comments on this project.

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Illinois Department of Transportation

Division of Public and Intermodal Transportation

100 West Randolph Street / Suite 6-600 / Chicago, Illinois / 60601

September 11, 2009

Mr. Mike Stead
Illinois Commerce Commission
Rail Safety Section
527 East Capital Avenue
Springfield, IL 62701

Dear Mr. Stead:

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), in cooperation with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) is initiating the information gathering phase of the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed improvements included in the Chicago to St. Louis High-Speed Rail Project. Because the project may affect your area of expertise, your facilities, or your activities or programs, we are seeking your comments on this project.

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Illinois Department of Transportation

Division of Public and Intermodal Transportation

100 West Randolph Street / Suite 6-600 / Chicago, Illinois / 60601

September 11, 2009

Ms. Terri Savko
State of Illinois Department of Agriculture
P.O. Box 19281
Springfield, IL 62794-9281

Dear Ms. Savko:

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), in cooperation with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) is initiating the information gathering phase of the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed improvements included in the Chicago to St. Louis High-Speed Rail Project. Because the project may affect your area of expertise, your facilities, or your activities or programs, we are seeking your comments on this project.

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George Weber
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Illinois Department of Transportation

Division of Public and Intermodal Transportation

100 West Randolph Street / Suite 6-600 / Chicago, Illinois / 60601

September 11, 2009

Mr. Steve Hamer
Illinois Department of Natural Resources
One Natural Resources Way
Springfield, IL 62702-1271

Dear Mr. Hamer:

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Illinois Department of Transportation

Division of Public and Intermodal Transportation

100 West Randolph Street / Suite 6-600 / Chicago, Illinois / 60601

September 11, 2009

Mr. Douglas P. Scott
Illinois Environmental Protection Agency
Director
P.O. Box 19276
Springfield, IL 62794-9276

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Tim Selover, Phil Pasterak – Parsons Brinckerhoff



Illinois Department of Transportation

Division of Public and Intermodal Transportation

100 West Randolph Street / Suite 6-600 / Chicago, Illinois / 60601

September 11, 2009

Ms. Anne Haaker
Illinois Historic Preservation Agency
Preservation Services
#1 Old State Capitol Plaza
Springfield IL 62701-1507

Dear Ms. Haaker:

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), in cooperation with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) is initiating the information gathering phase of the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed improvements included in the Chicago to St. Louis High-Speed Rail Project. Because the project may affect your area of expertise, your facilities, or your activities or programs, we are seeking your comments on this project.

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In Illinois, the project will rehabilitate roadbed; replace ties, rail and ballast; and install or upgrade train signaling where necessary. It is anticipated that the vast majority of construction activities, including staging areas, will be within existing railroad rights-of-way. Work done outside of the railroad right-of-way includes minor ditching, bridge, culvert and station work.

The development of high speed rail within this corridor was first studied in 1979. In 1992 the Secretary of Transportation designated the Chicago-St. Louis line as part of the "Chicago Hub Network" high-speed rail corridor. This led to a Financial and Implementation Plan (May 1994) and the concept and corridor were validated in the commercial feasibility study released by the FRA, High-Speed Ground Transportation for America (August 1996). A Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Chicago-St. Louis High Speed Rail Project was issued in January 2003, followed by inclusion as a key component in the Midwest Regional Rail System report in September 2004. The Record of Decision (ROD) on the EIS for the Chicago-St. Louis HSR Project was executed on January 8, 2004.

The comments and material you supply will be used to determine if the proposed improvements may have impacts that warrant further consideration and are consistent with future long-term development plans within the study corridor. Your comments will be incorporated into the environmental planning process and Environmental Assessment document as appropriate. We ask that you provide your agency's comments by September 18, 2009.

This Tier 1 EA is identified by FRA as an essential first step in the development of an intercity passenger rail corridor. The focus of the Tier 1 EA will be on establishing purpose and need, estimating ridership, selection of the preferred corridor, identifying the station stops, specifying the service levels, defining the type of operations, and identifying the logical next phases. The specific construction activities would be evaluated in subsequent Tier 2 NEPA documents.

This Tier 1 EA is needed to complete a Track 2 application for a High-Speed Intercity Rail Program (HSIRP) grant. On April 16, 2009, President Obama, together with Vice President Biden and Secretary of Transportation LaHood, announced a new vision for developing high-speed rail in America. They called for a collaborative effort among the Federal Government, States, railroads, and other key stakeholders to help transform America's transportation system through a national network of high-speed rail corridors. This notice builds on this "Vision for High-Speed Rail" (available on FRA's Web site) by detailing the application requirements and procedures for obtaining funding for high-speed and intercity passenger rail projects under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) and the Department of Transportation Appropriations Acts of 2008 and 2009 (FY 2008/2009 DOT Appropriations Act), while laying the foundation for a longer-term program to establish a network of high-speed rail corridors.

The enclosed information should help you understand the nature of the project and location of the proposed railway improvement. Because this effort is part of an ARRA grant application, we are operating under an accelerated schedule and would appreciate comments by September 18, 2009.

If you have any questions about the project, please do not hesitate to contact Barbara Stevens at (217) 785-4245, or by email at Barbara.Stevens@Illinois.gov.

The Illinois Department of Transportation thanks you in advance for your prompt review and responses to our request for comments.

Sincerely,



George Weber
Bureau of Railroads, Bureau Chief

Enclosures:
Project Overview
Map of Project Limits

cc: Barbara Stevens – IDOT, Bureau of Design and Environment
Tim Selover, Phil Pasterak – Parsons Brinckerhoff



Illinois Department of Transportation

Division of Public and Intermodal Transportation

100 West Randolph Street / Suite 6-600 / Chicago, Illinois / 60601

September 11, 2009

Ms. Gayle Unruh
Missouri Department of Transportation
Environmental Section
2217 St. Mary's Blvd
PO Box 270
Jefferson City, MO 65102

Dear Ms. Unruh:

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), in cooperation with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) is initiating the information gathering phase of the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed improvements included in the Chicago to St. Louis High-Speed Rail Project. Because the project may affect your area of expertise, your facilities, or your activities or programs, we are seeking your comments on this project.

This project, which is part of the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative, proposes to add high-speed passenger rail service between Chicago, Illinois and St. Louis, Missouri. Initially, the service will include three round-trip passenger trains operating at a maximum speed of 110 miles per hour (mph) and one at a maximum speed of 79 mph between Joliet and St. Louis. On completion of all improvements envisioned for the line from Joliet to St. Louis, the expected service plan is to operate five round-trips per day at a maximum speed of 110 mph.

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The Illinois Department of Transportation thanks you in advance for your prompt review and responses to our request for comments.

Sincerely,



George Weber
Bureau of Railroads, Bureau Chief

Enclosures:
Project Overview
Map of Project Limits

cc: Barbara Stevens – IDOT, Bureau of Design and Environment
Tim Selover, Phil Pasterak – Parsons Brinckerhoff



Illinois Department of Transportation

Division of Public and Intermodal Transportation

100 West Randolph Street / Suite 6-600 / Chicago, Illinois / 60601

September 11, 2009

Mr. Rod Massman
Administrator of Railroads
Missouri Department of Transportation
Multimodal Section
2217 St. Mary's Blvd
PO Box 270
Jefferson City, MO 65102

Dear Mr. Massman:

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), in cooperation with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) is initiating the information gathering phase of the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed improvements included in the Chicago to St. Louis High-Speed Rail Project. Because the project may affect your area of expertise, your facilities, or your activities or programs, we are seeking your comments on this project.

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If you have any questions about the project, please do not hesitate to contact Barbara Stevens at (217) 785-4245, or by email at Barbara.Stevens@Illinois.gov.

The Illinois Department of Transportation thanks you in advance for your prompt review and responses to our request for comments.

Sincerely,



George Weber
Bureau of Railroads, Bureau Chief

Enclosures:
Project Overview
Map of Project Limits

cc: Barbara Stevens – IDOT, Bureau of Design and Environment
Tim Selover, Phil Pasterak – Parsons Brinckerhoff

June 30, 2009

VIA FIRST-CLASS MAIL

Mr. George Weber, Acting Bureau Chief
Division of Public & Intermodal Transportation
300 West Adams Street, 2nd floor
Chicago, Illinois 60606

**NATIONAL
TRUST
FOR
HISTORIC
PRESERVATION®**

**Midwest
OFFICE**

Re: Proposed High Speed Rail Between Chicago, Illinois and St. Louis, Missouri

Dear Mr. Weber:

On behalf of the National Trust for Historic Preservation (National Trust), we would like to express our concern regarding the Illinois Department of Transportation's interest in securing funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) for a high speed rail corridor between Chicago, IL and St. Louis, MO. In particular, we believe this high speed rail could negatively affect historic properties and districts along the corridor. Adequate evaluation of these potential effects through required environmental analyses is critical to both identifying the effects and formulating alternatives to avoid or minimize the effects.

Congress chartered the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 1949 as a private, nonprofit membership organization to "facilitate public participation" in historic preservation, and to further the purposes of federal historic preservation laws. 16 U.S.C. §§ 461, 468. With the strong support of our 266,000 members nationwide, including 14,000 in Illinois, the National Trust works to protect significant historic sites and to advocate historic preservation as a fundamental value in programs and policies at all levels of government. Additionally, the National Trust owns or operates 30 historic sites open to the public, including the Gaylord Building located in Lockport, Illinois.

While the National Trust does not oppose the federal and state government's concept of a high speed rail to improve interstate transport, the currently proposed corridor between Chicago to St. Louis is in close proximity to significant historic resources and districts, potentially causing negative direct and indirect impacts. For example, current plans utilize tracks that are sited only fifteen (15) feet from the Gaylord Building, located in Lockport's National Register Historic District. The Gaylord Building has been a central part of Lockport and a landmark along the Illinois & Michigan Canal for 170 years and represents the canal's early importance to Illinois and the region's commercial significance throughout the 19th and 20th centuries.

The potential effect of high speed rail traffic in such close proximity to this historic structure, as well as the impact of at grade crossing on other local landmark and National Register historic districts along the corridor, should be thoroughly examined by the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) as part of the planning process for the proposed

Midwest Office

53 West Jackson Blvd., Suite 350

Chicago, IL 60604

P 312.939.5547

F 312.939.5651

E mwro@nthp.org

Serving: IA, IL, IN, MI, MN, MO, OH & WI

National Office

1785 Massachusetts Avenue, NW

Washington, DC 20036

P 202.588.6000

F 202.588.6038

E info@nthp.org

www.PreservationNation.org

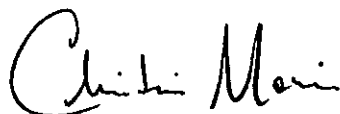
corridor. The National Trust strongly urges you to conduct an Environmental Assessment Worksheet to solicit the input of all state and local stakeholders affected by the proposal, and address these issues before proceeding with any further plans or requests for funding. The IDOT should also keep in mind the federal statutes that will be required to receive federal funding as it begins to make decisions about possible high speed rail corridors. As indicated by the Federal Railroad Administration in its discussion about the implementation of funding for high speed rail corridors under the ARRA, the Illinois Department of Transportation, as the grant recipient, is required to assist the federal agency in meeting the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act.¹

Please include both Elizabeth Merritt and Christina Morris of the National Trust in your distribution list for public notices of any meetings, and for the circulation of any documents for public comment. All correspondence should be directed to:

Christina Morris
Program Officer
Midwest Office
53 West Jackson Blvd.
Suite 350
Chicago, IL 60604
christina_morris@nthp.org

Elizabeth Merritt
Deputy General Counsel
National Trust for Historic Preservation
1785 Massachusetts Ave., NW
Washington, D.C. 20036-2117
betsy_merritt@nthp.org

Sincerely,



Christina Morris
Program Officer



Elizabeth Merritt
Deputy General Counsel

Cc: Jim Peters, Landmarks Illinois
Anne Haaker, Illinois Historic Preservation Agency
Mark Harmon, Gaylord Building Site Council
Vince Michael, Trustee, National Trust for Historic Preservation
Jean Follett, IL Advisor, National Trust for Historic Preservation

¹ See U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Railroad Administration, Guidance on the High-speed Intercity Passenger Rail Program, Docket No. FRA-2009-0045, p. 57, *available at* http://www.fra.dot.gov/Downloads/RRDev/HSIPR_Guidance_6-16-09-WEB.pdf (June 16, 2009).

STATE OF ILLINOIS



ILLINOIS COMMERCE COMMISSION TRANSPORTATION DIVISION / RAIL SAFETY SECTION

Michael E. Stead

Rail Safety Program Administrator

September 16, 2009

George Weber
Chief, Bureau of Railroads
Division of Public and Intermodal Transportation
100 West Randolph Street, Suite 6-600
Chicago, IL 60601

Dear Mr. Weber:

Thank you for presenting Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC) staff with an opportunity to provide comments for the Illinois Department of Transportation's (IDOT) information gathering phase of the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed improvements included in the Chicago to St. Louis High-Speed Rail project.

Staff recommends the following:

- (1) Existing public and private grade crossings that are either redundant, unnecessary or where safety improvements cannot reasonably be performed, due to crossing geometry or proximity of complex highway intersections, should be identified for closure.
- (2) Four-quadrant gates, equipped with presence/intrusion detection and integrated with Positive Train Control (PTC), should be the standard warning device system at each public highway-rail grade crossing located within those segments of the Chicago-St. Louis Corridor where train operating speeds are proposed to be between 80-110 mph. The presence/intrusion detection systems should include the capability to detect any object of significant obstruction (e.g. car, truck) that remains on the crossing; the presence/intrusion detection systems should communicate to approaching passenger trains the presence of any significant obstruction in time for the train to reduce speed (i.e. approximately 20 mph) or stop before reaching the crossing; freight trains operating through the corridor are not governed by this information unless route conditions indicate and the freight railroad so elects;
- (3) Four-quadrant gates, equipped with presence/intrusion detection and integrated with Positive Train Control (PTC), should be considered for each public highway-rail grade crossing located within those segments of the Chicago-St. Louis Corridor where train operating speeds are proposed to be less than 80 mph. The minimum warning system should be standard 2-quadrant gates equipped with constant warning time control circuitry.
- (4) Locked gates with dispatch control over entry should be installed at each private highway-rail grade crossing located within those segments of the Chicago-St. Louis Corridor where train operating speeds are proposed to be

Mr. George Weber
September 16, 2009
Page Two

- between 80-110 mph, unless vehicular traffic warrants the same safety treatments as a public grade crossing.
- (5) Locked gates with dispatch control over entry or other safety measures should be installed at each private highway-rail grade crossing located within those segments of the Chicago-St. Louis Corridor where train operating speeds are proposed to be less than 80 mph.
 - (6) Access along railroad right-of-way through communities should be restricted (e.g. fencing), due to increased train speeds and train traffic.
 - (7) Safety treatments should be performed at all pedestrian-rail grade crossings, due to increased train speeds and train traffic.
 - (8) Necessary safety improvements should be identified for all public highway-rail grade crossings where vehicular traffic backs up across the tracks, especially at those locations where vehicular storage between a highway intersection and the crossing is reduced due to the installation of the proposed 2nd mainline track.
 - (9) The highway approaches of the public highway-rail grade crossings along the corridor should be evaluated for compliance with the minimum criteria of 92 Ill. Adm. Code 1535. Where necessary, improvements to the highway approaches should be made (e.g. improve crossings with steep highway approach grades).
 - (10) Public highway-rail grade crossings where high-speed track improvements will create roadway geometric issues, including difficulties installing the railroad warning devices, should be identified, and roadway improvements planned to address those concerns.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on IDOT's information gathering phase of the Environmental Assessment (EA). If you have any questions, or need additional information, please contact me at (217) 557-1285 or mstead@icc.illinois.gov.

Very truly yours,



Michael E. Stead
Rail Safety Program Administrator

cc: Barbara Stevens, IDOT
Tim Selover, Parsons Brinckerhoff
Phil Pasterak, Parsons Brinckerhoff

GAYLORD BUILDING

NATIONAL TRUST
for HISTORIC PRESERVATION

09.16.2009

Mr. George Weber, Bureau Chief
Bureau of Railroads
Illinois Department of Transportation
100 West Randolph Street, Suite 6-600
Chicago, Illinois 60601

Dear Mr. Weber:

The Gaylord Building Site Council has been informed that the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) is seeking comments for the Environmental Assessment (EA), regarding the proposed Chicago to St. Louis High Speed Rail (HSR) Project.

While we applaud the state and federal government's support of interstate transport, we are concerned about the route that will utilize the tracks that are parallel to and just fifteen feet from the Gaylord Building, an 1838 historic site of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and the 1850 Norton Building among other irreplaceable structures in Lockport's National Register Historic District.

We do understand that there are no current plans to raise the speed through Lockport, but IDOT could not provide a guarantee that higher speeds would never happen. IDOT also informed us that the proposal will initially increase the number of trips through Lockport to eighteen. Additionally, there is apparently a desire by the freight lines to augment the number of trains on the same tracks, possibly as high as seven more each day. Finally, as Will County population grows and ridership expands, it is likely that a number of METRA trains will also be added to the same tracks.

We believe the ever growing number of passenger and freight trains will negatively impact the heart of Lockport, and any potential increase in speed could be devastating. The quality of life for residents and visitors will diminish, and community safety will be impaired. The very existence of historic structures will be threatened.

Lockport's first responders struggle daily with the current number of trains that block crossings, slowing emergency aid. Residents already strain to lessen the harmful effects to homes, business and the historic sites by the noise, vibrations and traffic congestions caused by the railroads. Their exertions will certainly be exacerbated by extra trains and potentially elevated speeds.

Protecting the Irreplaceable



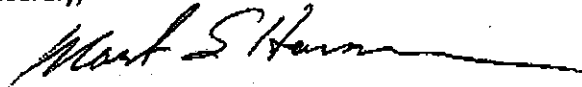
200 WEST 8TH STREET • LOCKPORT, IL 60441
815.588.1100 • FAX: 815.588.1101 • WWW.NATIONALTRUST.ORG

There is a viable alignment on IDOT's preferred route between Chicago and Joliet that would relocate the HSR to the west side of the Lockport and out of the Historic District. This alignment would utilize the tracks of the Burlington Northern/Santa Fe Railroad (BNSF) with possible connection points between Lockport and Lemont. This viable alignment on the preferred route would create a safer environment for people, the historic structures and the trains themselves, primarily due to less grade crossings.

However, if the BNSF alignment through Lockport is not adopted by IDOT, we encourage IDOT to select either the Metra Rock Island District Alignment or the Norfolk Southern Alignment, which are included in IDOT's proposal. These proposed alternatives would be safer alignments compared to the Lockport route that utilizes the Canadian National-Illinois Central/Union Pacific tracks.

We appreciate your time and consideration of the alternate alignments that would preserve Lockport's Historic District.

Sincerely,



Mark S. Harmon, Director
Gaylord Building Historic Site
mharmon@canalcor.org
1.815.838.9400



Natural Resources Conservation Service
2118 W. Park Court
Champaign, IL 61821-2986
(217) 353-6613

www.il.nrcs.usda.gov

September 16, 2009

George Weber
Bureau of Railroads, Bureau Chief
Illinois Department of Transportation
Division of Public and Intermodal Transportation
100 West Randolph Street, Suite 6-600
Chicago, IL 60601

Dear Mr. Weber:

We have reviewed the documents that you submitted on the proposed improvements included in the Chicago to St. Louis High-Speed Rail Project.

As described, the vast majority of construction activities, including staging areas, will be within existing railroad rights-of-way. I do not foresee any issues/impacts that would warrant further consideration.

I would encourage the use of appropriate soil erosion control measures during construction activities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William J. Gradle".

WILLIAM J. GRADLE
State Conservationist



Illinois Historic Preservation Agency

FAX (217) 782-8161

1 Old State Capitol Plaza • Springfield, Illinois 62701-1512 • www.illinois-history.gov

Various Counties

Chicago to St. Louis

High Speed Rail Project

Exact Route Not Yet Selected

IHPA Log #011091109

September 17, 2009

George Weber

Illinois Department of Transportation

Division of Public and Intermodal Transportation

100 W. Randolph St., Suite 6-600

Chicago, IL 60601

Dear Mr. Weber:

Thank you for initiating consultation with our office on the referenced project. This consultation is required by section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended and its implementing regulations, 36 CFR part 800, Protecting Historic Properties.

In order to begin this consultation, our office will need the following information:

1. Complete project description, including a definition of the area of potential effects (APE) for the project and a statement as to how this was developed
2. List of all sites and structures within the APE that are on or possibly eligible for the National Register of Historic Places
3. Possible effects to each of those properties that could be caused by project implementation taking into account direct effects of construction, increase in noise and vibration levels and changes in environment and setting (effects can be direct or indirect)
4. Views of any interested parties including not only the views of communities along the route, but also those of preservation advocacy groups, such as Landmarks Illinois and the National Trust for Historic Preservation

Once we have this information we will either continue consultation to avoid or mitigate any adverse impacts or offer our comments in accordance with the law. Please note that this project may impact properties that are National Historic Landmarks and as such, may require the comments of the National Park Service and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

Thank you for inviting our comments. We look forward to working with you to ensure that historic resources are adequately considered during the project planning process.

In your reply, please refer to IHPA Log #011091109. If you have any further questions, please contact me at 217/785-5027.

Sincerely,

Anne E. Haaker

Deputy State Historic

Preservation Officer

c: Barbara Stevens, IDOT

Tim Selover, Parsons Brinckerhoff



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 5

77 WEST JACKSON BOULEVARD

CHICAGO, IL 60604-3590

SEP 18 2009

REPLY TO THE ATTENTION OF:

E-19J

George Weber
Bureau of Railroads, Bureau Chief
Illinois Department of Transportation
Division of Public and Intermodal Transportation
100 West Randolph Street, Suite 6-600
Chicago, Illinois 60601

RE: Scoping Comments on the proposed Chicago to St. Louis High-Speed Rail Project

Dear Mr. Weber:

In accordance with our responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act, and in anticipation of reviewing future NEPA documentation for the Chicago to St. Louis High-Speed Rail passenger service (HSR), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the information provided on September 11, 2009, regarding this project.

The President's "Vision for High Speed Rail" calls for applications from states to develop a new generation of rail service for our country. This proposal by the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) is presented as a Track 2 project according to the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) protocols published at 74 FR 29900. A previous Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was prepared for a similar proposal in 2003. The current NEPA documentation is comparable to the first level in a tiered NEPA process, having a broad scope of large or general considerations for possible impacts. More site-specific details are to be addressed in a future second level analysis.

This proposal is for a HSR starting in the St. Louis, Missouri, Amtrak Station and following the existing Amtrak route north to Dwight, Illinois. Three alternative routes are being considered for the remaining travel from Dwight to Union Station in downtown Chicago. All three of these alternative routes would be along existing rail right-of-way. An additional alternative segment, not part of the 2003 EIS, is proposed for the Springfield, Illinois region. When the final route is determined, it is expected to provide a station-to-station double-track mainline with capacity for 110 mile per hour service from St. Louis to Joliet, Illinois and existing maximum speeds from Joliet into Chicago.

EPA reviewed the materials provided and offers the following comments consistent with the issues NEPA addresses, which are a project's Purpose and Need, Alternatives, Environmental Impacts, and Mitigation of Unavoidable Impacts.

PURPOSE AND NEED

The Purpose and Need for this HSR project is comparable and consistent with goals of the FRA funding program for a Track 2 program.

ALTERNATIVES

Typical of these HSR proposals, the rights of way are predominantly existing rail corridors with some modifications that may incorporate abandoned or out-of-service tracks. Any new railway for needed connections, to avoid certain impacts, and for new station sites should be located and planned so as to have minimal impacts. Except for certain concerns noted below under "Environmental Impacts," the station-specific sites and alternative rail corridors will be the subject of second tier level NEPA documentation.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Generally, impacts are anticipated to be minimal because the work will be in previously disturbed railroad rights of way. However, all impacts to the human and natural environment need to be considered for this level one NEPA document to determine if further analysis is warranted. We discuss here only certain topics that we anticipate warrant possible analysis. Specific project aspects or alternatives may call for analysis of additional issues to determine whether significant impacts are likely to result from the project's implementation.

AIR QUALITY AND AIR TOXICS

One of the public benefits of rail service is lower emissions. NEPA documentation should discuss air quality non-attainment and maintenance areas where construction, operations and maintenance facility emissions are included in state conformity budgets. Outside such areas, it is appropriate to specify the best management practices (BMP) that will be followed to reduce emissions, particularly of diesel-related air toxics. If railbed and ballast will be disturbed, the potential for dust aeration of possible hazardous or toxic materials should be indicated and specific BMP proposed. Please provide modeling estimates for the emissions savings this proposal will provide, such as annual trips in the horizon year that have moved from auto, airplane and other modes. Higher speed efficiencies and new fuel technologies for trains could also result in air quality benefits, including reductions in greenhouse gases and the region's contributions to global climate change.

WATER QUALITY, SURFACE WATERS, AND WETLANDS

Water quality will mostly be considered during construction of the HSR project, so BMP to reduce siltation and run-off impacts, particularly at hazardous spill locations, should be itemized. If right of way widening or track realignments are needed, please document efforts at

reducing impacts to surface waters and wetlands by aligning the corridor so that impacts to these resources are avoided or minimized. In many locations, the existing rights of way run either immediately adjacent to or right through the middle of a surface water body or wetland. Please discuss how these sensitive locations will be protected from spills and derailments through rail design and maintenance practices.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

The federal government is taking a further look at how projects it supports may impact environmental justice (EJ) populations. While public transportation such as this HSR project generally benefits these groups, the NEPA document should discuss station locations, rail yards, emergency service interruptions or delays, economic benefits or losses, and noise considerations in relation to environmental justice neighborhoods. We recommend applying the concept of disproportionate impact to EJ communities at a local scale.

INDIRECT AND CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Shifting passenger trips to rail from other modes may have positive indirect impacts that should be presented in this NEPA document. These may include time and cost savings, resources spared, reduction of accidents and related health benefits. Cumulative impacts should likewise be enumerated. One area that should specifically be addressed in both contexts is impacts to other rail services, local commuter and freight rail.

NOISE

The NEPA document should discuss whether higher speed trains generate different noise impacts than current rail service, (e.g., frequency, duration, and intensity of anticipated noise impacts). These impacts would again be key to note for EJ communities.

HISTORIC, CULTURAL AND ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Perhaps the most prevalent impact to historic structures for these HSR projects will be the use of old train stations. We recommend early communication with the State Historic Preservation Offices in Illinois and Missouri, and with local historic groups would be prudent in deciding if and how to incorporate such landmarks or potentially listed landmarks in the scheme of HSR. The level one NEPA documentation should address potential impacts to historic and archeological resources. Native American tribes with potential interest in the areas to be affected by the project should be contacted and their interest solicited.

THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES

The potential for impacts to Federal and State-listed threatened and endangered species should be documented. If there is a substantial increase in the daily number of trains passing through habitat areas, or if train speeds are substantially increased above the present speeds, then an analysis of potentials for individual takings should be addressed. Although there is not much

information on this subject, current studies by the Illinois Natural History Survey may be helpful in considering this issue.

MITIGATION OF UNAVOIDABLE IMPACTS


A HSR proposal may have some rigid constraints due to existing rights of way and shared use. Impacts should be clearly discussed along with efforts to avoid or minimize those impacts. Mitigation of unavoidable impacts should be discussed in the level one NEPA document, with specific commitments and anticipated mitigation ratios as appropriate. Follow-up measures, such as adaptive management and long-term maintenance, should also be discussed.

PROJECT SPECIFIC IMPACTS

There may be specific impacts this project would have within the urban centers of St. Louis, Chicago and Springfield, due to at-grade crossings, near-by schools and sensitive population centers or institutions, and freight and commuter train interactions. Please include a discussion of these concerns in the level one NEPA document.

Thank you for the opportunity to review the preliminary information for this project. We look forward to receiving the next level of detail information as this project proceeds. If you have any questions on our comments, please contact me or Norm West of my staff, by phone at (312) 353-5692 or by e-mail at: west.norman@epa.gov.

Sincerely,


for Kenneth A. Westlake
Chief, NEPA Implementation Section
Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance



Pat Quinn, Governor
Thomas E. Jennings, Director

Bureau of Land and Water Resources

State Fairgrounds • P.O. Box 19281 • Springfield, IL 62794-9281 • 217/782-6297 • TDD 217/524-6858 • Fax 217/557-0993

September 23, 2009

Ms. Barbara Stevens
Environment Section Chief
Bureau of Design and Environment
Illinois Department of Transportation
2300 South Dirksen Parkway
Springfield, Illinois 62764-0002

Re: Chicago to St. Louis High-Speed Rail Project
Tier 1 Environmental Assessment

Dear Ms. Stevens:

The Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) is in receipt of the September 11, 2009 correspondence stating that the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), in cooperation with the Federal Railroad Administration, will initiate a Tier 1 Environmental Assessment for proposed transportation improvements associated with the Chicago to St. Louis High-Speed Rail Project. The IDOT has requested IDOA comments pertaining to the information gathering phase of the Environmental Assessment (EA).

This project proposes to add high-speed passenger rail service (110 miles per hour) between Chicago, Illinois and St. Louis, Missouri. This includes the construction of a second set of tracks from Joliet to St. Louis; a second set exists from Joliet to Chicago. Your correspondence states the IDOT anticipates the vast majority of construction activities, including staging areas, will be within existing railroad rights-of-way. Work done outside the railroad rights-of-way includes minor ditching, bridge, culvert and station work.

IDOA submitted comments in August 2000 for the Chicago-St. Louis High-Speed Rail Draft Environmental Impact Statement that expressed significant concerns for safety associated with the development of high-speed rail service in this corridor. The Department continues to voice its concerns with the need for safety when providing landowners' access to properties in agricultural use. This includes any road closures that may occur in order to implement high-speed passenger rail service as well as adverse travel time that results from restricted access to properties. In addition, the IDOA is concerned about the possibility of significant land acquisition beyond the existing railroad right-of-way.

The IDOA looks forward to participating in the upcoming study and the development of the Tier 1 Environmental Assessment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Steven D. Chard".

Steven D. Chard, Acting Chief
Bureau of Land and Water Resources

SDC:TS

cc: Director Tom Jennings, IDOA; Jared Thornley, IDOA; Larry O'Brien, IDOA; Warren Goetsch, IDOA; Agency project file



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Railroad
Administration**

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

September 21, 2009

Mr. Russell Bradley
Kickapoo Tribe of Kansas
P.O. Box 271
1107 Goldfinch Road
Horton, KS 66439

SUBJECT: Initial Section 106 Coordination for the Proposed High Speed Rail – Chicago – St. Louis Corridor
Cook, Will, Kankakee, Grundy, Livingston, McLean, Logan, Sangamon, Macoupin, Jersey, Madison and St Clair Counties, Illinois

Dear Mr. Bradley:

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), in cooperation with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) is initiating the information gathering phase of the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed improvements included in the Chicago to St. Louis High-Speed Rail Project. Because the project may affect your area of expertise, your facilities, or your activities or programs, we are seeking your comments on this project.

This project, which is part of the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative, proposes to add high-speed passenger rail service between Chicago, Illinois and St. Louis, Missouri. Initially, the service will include three round-trip passenger trains operating at a maximum speed of 110 miles per hour (mph) and one at a maximum speed of 79 mph between Joliet and St. Louis. On completion of all improvements envisioned for the line from Joliet to St. Louis, the expected service plan is to operate five round-trips per day at a maximum speed of 110 mph.

The proposed passenger rail service would cross the Mississippi River from East St. Louis, Illinois to St. Louis, Missouri on the MacArthur Bridge. Work on this bridge, if any, would be limited to track and/or tie replacement. The project is shown in the attached figure.

In Illinois, the project will rehabilitate roadbed; replace ties, rail and ballast; and install or upgrade train signaling where necessary. It is anticipated that the vast majority of construction activities, including staging areas, will be within existing railroad rights-of-way. Work done outside of the railroad right-of-way includes minor ditching, bridge, culvert and station work.

The development of high speed rail within this corridor was first studied in 1979. In 1992 the Secretary of Transportation designated the Chicago-St. Louis line as part of the "Chicago Hub Network" high-speed rail corridor. This led to a Financial and Implementation Plan (May 1994) and the concept and corridor were validated in the commercial feasibility study released by the FRA, High-Speed Ground Transportation for America (August 1996). A Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Chicago-St. Louis High Speed Rail Project was issued in January 2003, followed by inclusion as a key component in

the Midwest Regional Rail System report in September 2004. The Record of Decision (ROD) on the EIS for the Chicago-St. Louis HSR Project was executed on January 8, 2004.

The comments and material you supply will be used to determine if the proposed improvements may have impacts that warrant further consideration and are consistent with future long-term development plans within the study corridor. Your comments will be incorporated into the environmental planning process and Environmental Assessment document as appropriate.

This Tier 1 EA is identified by FRA as an essential first step in the development of an intercity passenger rail corridor. The focus of the Tier 1 EA will be on establishing purpose and need, estimating ridership, identifying potential environmental impacts and mitigation measures, selecting the preferred corridor, identifying the station stops, specifying the service levels, defining the type of operations, identifying improvements needed to support the proposed operations and service levels, and identifying the logical next phases. The specific construction activities would be identified and evaluated at a Tier 1 or programmatic level in the Tier 1 EA and then evaluated in greater detail in subsequent Tier 2 NEPA documents.

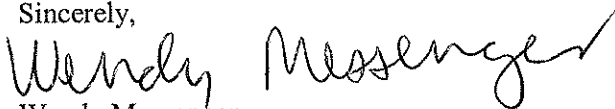
This Tier 1 EA is needed to complete a Track 2 application for a High-Speed Intercity Rail Program (HSIRP) grant. One of the requirements for submitting a Track 2 application to FRA is the preparation of a "corridor-wide" National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) study. One of the important elements of this study is an assessment of potential impacts to Historic and Cultural Resources in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 as amended (NHPA). NHPA recognizes that federally funded undertakings, like the subject project, can affect historic properties, such as those with religious, cultural, and/or historic significance. In accordance with the regulations in 36 CFR 800, implementing compliance with Section 106 of the NHPA, we are initiating consultation with you, as the designated point of contact for your tribe, to determine if you have information you could share regarding tribal concerns in the project area. In addition, we would like to know if you wish to be a Section 106 consulting party on the project. Early awareness of your concerns can serve to protect cultural properties considered important by your tribe.

If you act as a consulting party you will receive cultural resource assessment reports and related documentation, be invited to attend project meetings with FRA, IDOT, and the Illinois State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and be asked to provide input throughout the process.

If you wish to participate as a consulting party or if you have any questions or comments about the project, please contact Barbara Stevens of the Illinois Department of Transportation at (217) 785-4245, or by email at Barbara.Stevens@Illinois.gov.

The Federal Railroad Administration thanks you in advance for your prompt review and responses to our request for comments.

Sincerely,



Wendy Messenger
Environmental Protection Specialist

Enclosures:
Project Overview
Map of Project Limits

cc: George Weber, Barbara Stevens – Illinois Department of Transportation
Phil Pasterak, Tim Selover – Parsons Brinckerhoff



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Railroad
Administration**

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

September 21, 2009

Ms. Clarice M. Werle
Forest County Potawatomi Community
P.O. Box 340
Crandon, WI 54520

SUBJECT: Initial Section 106 Coordination for the Proposed High Speed Rail – Chicago – St. Louis Corridor
Cook, Will, Kankakee, Grundy, Livingston, McLean, Logan, Sangamon, Macoupin, Jersey, Madison and St Clair Counties, Illinois

Dear Ms. Werle:

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), in cooperation with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) is initiating the information gathering phase of the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed improvements included in the Chicago to St. Louis High-Speed Rail Project. Because the project may affect your area of expertise, your facilities, or your activities or programs, we are seeking your comments on this project.

This project, which is part of the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative, proposes to add high-speed passenger rail service between Chicago, Illinois and St. Louis, Missouri. Initially, the service will include three round-trip passenger trains operating at a maximum speed of 110 miles per hour (mph) and one at a maximum speed of 79 mph between Joliet and St. Louis. On completion of all improvements envisioned for the line from Joliet to St. Louis, the expected service plan is to operate five round-trips per day at a maximum speed of 110 mph.

The proposed passenger rail service would cross the Mississippi River from East St. Louis, Illinois to St. Louis, Missouri on the MacArthur Bridge. Work on this bridge, if any, would be limited to track and/or tie replacement. The project is shown in the attached figure.

In Illinois, the project will rehabilitate roadbed; replace ties, rail and ballast; and install or upgrade train signaling where necessary. It is anticipated that the vast majority of construction activities, including staging areas, will be within existing railroad rights-of-way. Work done outside of the railroad right-of-way includes minor ditching, bridge, culvert and station work.

The development of high speed rail within this corridor was first studied in 1979. In 1992 the Secretary of Transportation designated the Chicago-St. Louis line as part of the "Chicago Hub Network" high-speed rail corridor. This led to a Financial and Implementation Plan (May 1994) and the concept and corridor were validated in the commercial feasibility study released by the FRA, High-Speed Ground Transportation for America (August 1996). A Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Chicago-St. Louis High Speed Rail Project was issued in January 2003, followed by inclusion as a key component in

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This Tier 1 EA is identified by FRA as an essential first step in the development of an intercity passenger rail corridor. The focus of the Tier 1 EA will be on establishing purpose and need, estimating ridership, identifying potential environmental impacts and mitigation measures, selecting the preferred corridor, identifying the station stops, specifying the service levels, defining the type of operations, identifying improvements needed to support the proposed operations and service levels, and identifying the logical next phases. The specific construction activities would be identified and evaluated at a Tier 1 or programmatic level in the Tier 1 EA and then evaluated in greater detail in subsequent Tier 2 NEPA documents.

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If you act as a consulting party you will receive cultural resource assessment reports and related documentation, be invited to attend project meetings with FRA, IDOT, and the Illinois State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and be asked to provide input throughout the process.

If you wish to participate as a consulting party or if you have any questions or comments about the project, please contact Barbara Stevens of the Illinois Department of Transportation at (217) 785-4245, or by email at Barbara.Stevens@Illinois.gov.

The Federal Railroad Administration thanks you in advance for your prompt review and responses to our request for comments.

Sincerely,



Wendy Messenger
Environmental Protection Specialist

Enclosures:
Project Overview
Map of Project Limits

cc: George Weber, Barbara Stevens – Illinois Department of Transportation
Phil Pasterak, Tim Selover – Parsons Brinckerhoff



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Railroad
Administration**

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

September 21, 2009

Ms. Trayce Stanhoff
Prairie Band of Potawatomi Nation
16281 Q Road
Mayetta, KS 66509

SUBJECT: Initial Section 106 Coordination for the Proposed High Speed Rail – Chicago – St. Louis Corridor
Cook, Will, Kankakee, Grundy, Livingston, McLean, Logan, Sangamon, Macoupin, Jersey, Madison and St Clair Counties, Illinois

Dear Ms. Stanhoff:

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The development of high speed rail within this corridor was first studied in 1979. In 1992 the Secretary of Transportation designated the Chicago-St. Louis line as part of the "Chicago Hub Network" high-speed rail corridor. This led to a Financial and Implementation Plan (May 1994) and the concept and corridor were validated in the commercial feasibility study released by the FRA, High-Speed Ground Transportation for America (August 1996). A Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Chicago-St. Louis High Speed Rail Project was issued in January 2003, followed by inclusion as a key component in

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The Federal Railroad Administration thanks you in advance for your prompt review and responses to our request for comments.

Sincerely,



Wendy Messenger
Environmental Protection Specialist

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Map of Project Limits

cc: George Weber, Barbara Stevens – Illinois Department of Transportation
Phil Pasterak, Tim Selover – Parsons Brinckerhoff



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Railroad
Administration**

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

September 21, 2009

Mr. Tony Salazar
Kickapoo Tribe of Oklahoma
P.O. Box 70
McCloud, OK 74851

SUBJECT: Initial Section 106 Coordination for the Proposed High Speed Rail – Chicago – St. Louis Corridor
Cook, Will, Kankakee, Grundy, Livingston, McLean, Logan, Sangamon, Macoupin, Jersey, Madison and St Clair Counties, Illinois

Dear Mr. Salazar:

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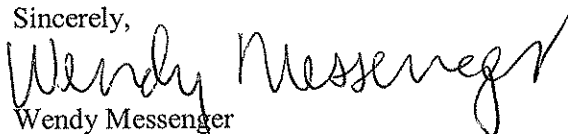
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The Federal Railroad Administration thanks you in advance for your prompt review and responses to our request for comments.

Sincerely,



Wendy Messenger
Environmental Protection Specialist

Enclosures:
Project Overview
Map of Project Limits

cc: George Weber, Barbara Stevens – Illinois Department of Transportation
Phil Pasterak, Tim Selover – Parsons Brinckerhoff



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Railroad
Administration**

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

September 21, 2009

Mr. Kenneth Meshiguad
Hannahville Indian Community
N14911 Hannahville B1 Rd.
Wilson, MI 49896-9728

SUBJECT: Initial Section 106 Coordination for the Proposed High Speed Rail – Chicago – St. Louis Corridor
Cook, Will, Kankakee, Grundy, Livingston, McLean, Logan, Sangamon, Macoupin, Jersey, Madison and St Clair Counties, Illinois

Dear Mr. Meshiguad:

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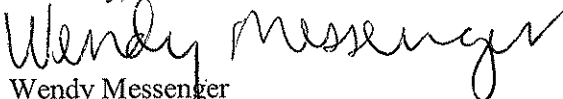
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Wendy Messenger
Environmental Protection Specialist

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Phil Pasterak, Tim Selover – Parsons Brinckerhoff



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Railroad
Administration**

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

September 21, 2009

Mr. John A. Barrett
Citizen Potawatomi Nation
1601 S. Gordon Cooper Drive
Shawnee, OK 74801

SUBJECT: Initial Section 106 Coordination for the Proposed High Speed Rail – Chicago – St. Louis Corridor
Cook, Will, Kankakee, Grundy, Livingston, McLean, Logan, Sangamon, Macoupin, Jersey, Madison and St Clair Counties, Illinois

Dear Mr. Barrett:

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), in cooperation with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) is initiating the information gathering phase of the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed improvements included in the Chicago to St. Louis High-Speed Rail Project. Because the project may affect your area of expertise, your facilities, or your activities or programs, we are seeking your comments on this project.

This project, which is part of the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative, proposes to add high-speed passenger rail service between Chicago, Illinois and St. Louis, Missouri. Initially, the service will include three round-trip passenger trains operating at a maximum speed of 110 miles per hour (mph) and one at a maximum speed of 79 mph between Joliet and St. Louis. On completion of all improvements envisioned for the line from Joliet to St. Louis, the expected service plan is to operate five round-trips per day at a maximum speed of 110 mph.

The proposed passenger rail service would cross the Mississippi River from East St. Louis, Illinois to St. Louis, Missouri on the MacArthur Bridge. Work on this bridge, if any, would be limited to track and/or tie replacement. The project is shown in the attached figure.

In Illinois, the project will rehabilitate roadbed; replace ties, rail and ballast; and install or upgrade train signaling where necessary. It is anticipated that the vast majority of construction activities, including staging areas, will be within existing railroad rights-of-way. Work done outside of the railroad right-of-way includes minor ditching, bridge, culvert and station work.

The development of high speed rail within this corridor was first studied in 1979. In 1992 the Secretary of Transportation designated the Chicago-St. Louis line as part of the "Chicago Hub Network" high-speed rail corridor. This led to a Financial and Implementation Plan (May 1994) and the concept and corridor were validated in the commercial feasibility study released by the FRA, High-Speed Ground Transportation for America (August 1996). A Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Chicago-St. Louis High Speed Rail Project was issued in January 2003, followed by inclusion as a key component in

the Midwest Regional Rail System report in September 2004. The Record of Decision (ROD) on the EIS for the Chicago-St. Louis HSR Project was executed on January 8, 2004.

The comments and material you supply will be used to determine if the proposed improvements may have impacts that warrant further consideration and are consistent with future long-term development plans within the study corridor. Your comments will be incorporated into the environmental planning process and Environmental Assessment document as appropriate.

This Tier 1 EA is identified by FRA as an essential first step in the development of an intercity passenger rail corridor. The focus of the Tier 1 EA will be on establishing purpose and need, estimating ridership, identifying potential environmental impacts and mitigation measures, selecting the preferred corridor, identifying the station stops, specifying the service levels, defining the type of operations, identifying improvements needed to support the proposed operations and service levels, and identifying the logical next phases. The specific construction activities would be identified and evaluated at a Tier 1 or programmatic level in the Tier 1 EA and then evaluated in greater detail in subsequent Tier 2 NEPA documents.

This Tier 1 EA is needed to complete a Track 2 application for a High-Speed Intercity Rail Program (HSIRP) grant. One of the requirements for submitting a Track 2 application to FRA is the preparation of a "corridor-wide" National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) study. One of the important elements of this study is an assessment of potential impacts to Historic and Cultural Resources in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 as amended (NHPA). NHPA recognizes that federally funded undertakings, like the subject project, can affect historic properties, such as those with religious, cultural, and/or historic significance. In accordance with the regulations in 36 CFR 800, implementing compliance with Section 106 of the NHPA, we are initiating consultation with you, as the designated point of contact for your tribe, to determine if you have information you could share regarding tribal concerns in the project area. In addition, we would like to know if you wish to be a Section 106 consulting party on the project. Early awareness of your concerns can serve to protect cultural properties considered important by your tribe.

If you act as a consulting party you will receive cultural resource assessment reports and related documentation, be invited to attend project meetings with FRA, IDOT, and the Illinois State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and be asked to provide input throughout the process.

If you wish to participate as a consulting party or if you have any questions or comments about the project, please contact Barbara Stevens of the Illinois Department of Transportation at (217) 785-4245, or by email at Barbara.Stevens@Illinois.gov.

The Federal Railroad Administration thanks you in advance for your prompt review and responses to our request for comments.

Sincerely,


Wendy Messenger
Environmental Protection Specialist

Enclosures:
Project Overview
Map of Project Limits

cc: George Weber, Barbara Stevens – Illinois Department of Transportation
Phil Pasterak, Tim Selover – Parsons Brinckerhoff



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Railroad
Administration**

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

September 21, 2009

Mr. Ed Rodgers
Quapaw Tribe of Indians
P.O. Box 765
Quapaw, OK 74354

SUBJECT: Initial Section 106 Coordination for the Proposed High Speed Rail – Chicago – St. Louis Corridor
Cook, Will, Kankakee, Grundy, Livingston, McLean, Logan, Sangamon, Macoupin, Jersey, Madison and St Clair Counties, Illinois

Dear Mr. Rodgers:

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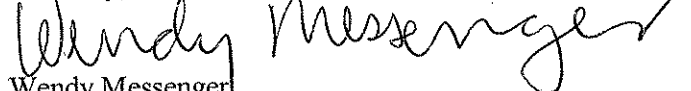
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Wendy Messenger
Environmental Protection Specialist

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cc: George Weber, Barbara Stevens – Illinois Department of Transportation
Phil Pasterak, Tim Selover – Parsons Brinckerhoff



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Railroad
Administration**

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

September 21, 2009

Mr. John P. Froman
Peoria Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma
P.O. Box 1527
Miami, OK 74355

SUBJECT: Initial Section 106 Coordination for the Proposed High Speed Rail – Chicago – St. Louis Corridor
Cook, Will, Kankakee, Grundy, Livingston, McLean, Logan, Sangamon, Macoupin, Jersey, Madison and St Clair Counties, Illinois

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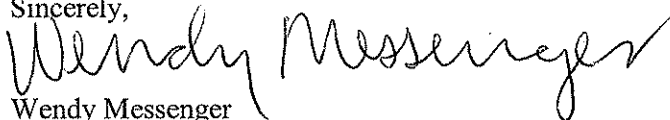
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Sincerely,



Wendy Messenger
Environmental Protection Specialist

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Map of Project Limits

cc: George Weber, Barbara Stevens – Illinois Department of Transportation
Phil Pasterak, Tim Selover – Parsons Brinckerhoff



Illinois Department of Transportation

Division of Public and Intermodal Transportation

100 West Randolph Street / Suite 6-600 / Chicago, Illinois / 60601

September 24, 2009

Mr. Mark Miles
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
Missouri Department of Natural Resources
P.O. Box 176
Jefferson City, MO 65102

Dear Mr. Miles:

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), in cooperation with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) is initiating the information gathering phase of the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed improvements included in the Chicago to St. Louis High-Speed Rail Project. Because the project may affect your area of expertise, your facilities, or your activities or programs, we are seeking your comments on this project.

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This Tier 1 EA is needed to complete a Track 2 application for a High-Speed Intercity Rail Program (HSIRP) grant. On April 16, 2009, President Obama, together with Vice President Biden and Secretary of Transportation LaHood, announced a new vision for developing high-speed rail in America. They called for a collaborative effort among the Federal Government, States, railroads, and other key stakeholders to help transform America's transportation system through a national network of high-speed rail corridors. This notice builds on this "Vision for High-Speed Rail" (available on FRA's Web site) by detailing the application requirements and procedures for obtaining funding for high-speed and intercity passenger rail projects under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) and the Department of Transportation Appropriations Acts of 2008 and 2009 (FY 2008/2009 DOT Appropriations Act), while laying the foundation for a longer-term program to establish a network of high-speed rail corridors.

The enclosed information should help you understand the nature of the project and location of the proposed railway improvement. Because this effort is part of an ARRA grant application, we are operating under an accelerated schedule and would appreciate comments by October 2, 2009.

If you have any questions about the project, please do not hesitate to contact Barbara Stevens at (217) 785-4245, or by email at Barbara.Stevens@Illinois.gov.

The Illinois Department of Transportation thanks you in advance for your prompt review and responses to our request for comments.

Sincerely,



George Weber
Bureau of Railroads, Bureau Chief

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