

## **Article 1: Progressive Railroading, 3/21/2016**

### **Rail News: Federal Legislation & Regulation**

#### **STB to prepare environmental statement for proposed Great Lakes Basin rail line**

The U.S. Surface Transportation Board's (STB) Office of Environmental Analysis late last week issued a notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) and initiate the scoping process for the Great Lakes Basin Transportation Inc.'s (GLBT) proposal to build and operate a 278-mile freight-rail line in Indiana, Illinois and Wisconsin.

The STB also announced the dates for public scoping meetings that will be held next month in each of the three states.

GLBT is proposing to construct a new rail line around the Chicago area to speed up freight transportation and provide additional capacity for growing rail traffic, according to the organization's website.

Specifically, the line would extend from LaPorte, Ind., through Illinois to Milton, Wis., and would connect with Class I's.

The proposed rail line would alleviate shipping congestion by creating a bypass for traffic not destined for or originating in the Chicago area.

The scoping meetings will be held April 11 in Manteno, Ill.; April 12 in Lowell, Ind.; April 13 in Wanatah, Ind.; April 14 in LaPorte, Ind.; April 18 in Janesville, Wis., April 19 in Rockford, Ill.; April 20 in Rochelle, Ill.; and April 21 in Seneca, Ill.

The meetings will include an open house format for the first hour, followed by a presentation by the STB's Office of Environmental Analysis and an opportunity for public comments and questions, STB officials said.

## **Article 2: Railway Age, 4/6/2016**

### **AAR: Railroads still looking for light at the end of the tunnel**

Carloads and intermodal units both took a hit in March 2016, dropping 14.2% and 7.7%, respectively, compared to the prior-year period, the Association of American Railroads (AAR) said on April 6, 2016, reporting weekly traffic as well as March traffic.

"Railroads are still looking for the light at the end of the tunnel, and for some commodities, including coal and other energy-related products, it's just not there yet," said AAR Senior Vice President of Policy and Economics John T. Gray. "That said, most economists are calling for continued slow but steady economic growth for the U.S. in the months ahead. Railroads stand ready to provide the freight transportation service the economy will require," Gray added.

Total carload traffic in March 2016 totaled 1,196,167 carloads, down 14.2% or 198,737 from March 2015. U.S. railroads also originated 1,250,925 containers and trailers in March 2016, down 7.7% or 104,343 units from the same month last year. For March 2016, combined U.S. carload and intermodal originations were 2,447,092, down 11% or 303,080 carloads and intermodal units from March 2015.

In March 2016, seven of the 20 carload commodity categories tracked by the AAR each month saw carload gains compared with March 2015. These included: chemicals, up 5.5% or 8,439 carloads; miscellaneous carloads, up 24.8% or 5,925 carloads; and motor vehicles and parts, up 5.2% or 4,690 carloads. Commodities that saw declines in March 2016 from March 2015 included: coal, down 35.9% or 188,250 carloads; petroleum and petroleum products, down 22.4% or 15,524 carloads; and metallic ores, down 27.1% or 7,281 carloads.

Excluding coal, carloads were down 1.2% or 10,487 carloads from March 2015.

Total U.S. carload traffic for the first quarter of 2016 was 3,143,251 carloads, down 13.8% or 501,616 carloads, while intermodal containers and trailers were 3,339,672 units, up 1.5% or 49,958 containers and trailers when compared to the same period in 2015. For the first quarter of 2016, total rail traffic volume in the United States was 6,482,923 carloads and intermodal units, down 6.5% or 451,658 carloads and intermodal units from the same point last year.

Total U.S. weekly rail traffic for the week ending April 2, 2016 was 491,979 carloads and intermodal units, down 10.4% compared with the same week last year. For the week, there were 238,138 carloads, down 14.3% compared with the same week in 2015, while U.S. weekly intermodal volume was 253,841 containers and trailers, down 6.4% compared to 2015.

Three of the 10 carload commodity groups posted an increase compared with the same week in 2015. They included miscellaneous carloads, up 20.2% to 9,324 carloads; chemicals, up 12.1% to 34,131 carloads; and grain, up 4.3% to 21,761 carloads. Commodity groups that posted decreases compared with the same week in 2015 were coal, down 39.2% to 62,256 carloads; petroleum and petroleum products, down 24.6% to 10,670 carloads; and motor vehicles and parts, down 3.2% to 17,330 carloads.

For the first 13 weeks of 2016, U.S. railroads reported cumulative volume of 3,143,251 carloads, down 13.8% from the same point last year; and 3,339,672 intermodal units, up 1.5% from last year. Total combined U.S. traffic for the first 13 weeks of 2016 was 6,482,923 carloads and intermodal units, a decrease of 6.5% compared to last year.

North American rail volume for the week ending April 2, 2016, on 13 reporting U.S., Canadian and Mexican railroads totaled 326,698 carloads, down 11.8% compared with the same week last year, and 319,806 intermodal units, down 6% compared with last year. Total combined weekly rail traffic in North America was 646,504 carloads and intermodal units, down 9%. North American rail volume for the first 13 weeks of 2016 was 8,494,620 carloads and intermodal units, down 6.1% compared with 2015. Canadian railroads reported 72,554 carloads for the week, down 6.8%, and 55,885 intermodal units, down 9.3% compared with the same week in 2015. For the first 13 weeks of 2016, Canadian railroads reported cumulative rail traffic volume of 1,669,001 carloads, containers and trailers, down 5.5%.

Mexican railroads reported 16,006 carloads for the week, up 10.7% compared with the same week last year, and 10,080 intermodal units, up 35.7%. Cumulative volume on Mexican railroads for the first 13 weeks of 2016 was 342,696 carloads and intermodal containers and trailers, down 0.2% from the same point last year.