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UNITED STATES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ENTERED
Office of Proceedings
July 20, 2022
Part of
Public Record

July 15, 2022

Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street SW
Washington, DC 20423

Re: Rail Line Abutting Landowners - Verified Petition for Declaratory Order, Docket No. 36623

To Whom It May Concern,

We are writing to elevate the concerns of our constituents in Hudson and Sudbury who, as rail line abutting landowners, are submitting a petition for a declaratory order from the Surface Transportation Board. They are asking the Board to declare that a rail line in the County of Middlesex, Massachusetts, owned by the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) has or has not been abandoned and does or does not remain subject to the jurisdiction of the Board. Representative landowners contacted our offices to express their concerns and inform us of the nature of their petition.

Since Eversource announced their project in 2016, our constituents in Hudson and Sudbury, their respective Town Select Boards, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Friends of the Assabet River National Wildlife Refuge, and area conservation and historical commissions have all voiced their concerns with the environmental and public health impacts of the project. According to our constituents, the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) determined that since the railway has not been used for years, the process of digging up the railbed could potentially release mercury, lead, coal, ash, and arsenic into the surrounding soil and groundwater.

Our constituents expressed particular concern with the Town of Hudson's wells and aquifers which directly abut the proposed project route. They have also made us aware that that four protected conservation areas are bisected by the MBTA right of way – the Hop Brook Marsh, Memorial Forest, Assabet River National Wildlife Refuge, and Marlborough-Sudbury State Forest. They additionally noted that the project would result in 26.7 acres of tree clearing, 12.5 acres of permanent wetland fill, and the potential displacement of numerous protected species of animals and plants.

We fully support grid expansion, and we are particularly happy that Eversource is working to expand and stabilize the grid for our districts. That being said, our understanding is that there is another viable proposed route for the Eversource project which would not carry with it the environmental nor the public health impacts associated with the current proposal and concerns of our constituents.

Our constituents, who are direct land abutters, have submitted this petition to the Board for a declaration on this railway. They believe that their land ownership provides them with the proper standing to make this request. We, as their representatives, simply ask that the Board give this petition, as well as the concerns elevated in this letter, its full and fair consideration.

Sincerely,

Lori Trahan
Member of Congress

Katherine Clark
Member of Congress