

John D. Ryan
Mayor
Renee N. Harding
Clerk and Collector



Trustees
Richard S. Dalzell
Monica M. Juarez
Christine L. McLawhorn
Christopher W. Murphy
Catalina Nava-Esparza
David A. Perretta

6/10/2021

The Honorable Cynthia T. Brown
Chief, Section of Administration, Office of Proceedings Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, S. W.
Washington, DC, 20423

RE: FD 36514, Canadian National RY. – Control – Kansas City Southern
Fr: Village of Alsip: Critical Analysis Letter

Dear Ms. Brown,

As the Village President of Alsip, Illinois, I am contacting you concerning FD Docket #36514 regarding the intension of Canadian National Railway merging with Kansas City Southern. I'm urging the STB to carefully consider whether approval of CN's voting trust request is warranted at this time, due to the potential the CN's freight trains will further burden the Chicagoland area with increased road network congestion by adding a significant increase in freight volume.

The intent of my letter is not to solely oppose these railways merger, or to cast a vote at this time, but to allow your organization an opportunity to understand my leadership's position when considering the Village of Alsip, IL location on the south side of Chicago, managing a heavy amount of rail traffic & rail spur, to facilitate a large industrial presence where we respectfully request the STB consider all of the Village's findings, including economic development, environmental, public interest and transportation (e. g. intermodal, rail traffic).

President Biden unveiled a \$2 trillion infrastructure plan, calling for the revamp of U.S. transportation infrastructure, water systems and manufacturing. Key points: 1) Funding Improvements to roads, bridges, railways and other infrastructure has been a central piece of Biden's recovery plans. 2) Biden would spend \$621 billion on roads, bridges, railways public transit, ports, waterways, airports and electric vehicles to improve the quality of air, reducing congestions and limiting greenhouse gas emissions. 3) Another \$80 million is needed to address Amtrak's repair backlog, while modernizing the Northeast Corridor line between Boston & Washington. In short, Biden's plan will impact the outcome of the CN – KSC merger.

According to the Village of Alsip's 2013 comprehensive plan, a large volume of truck traffic passing through the Village and has been detrimental to the safety of the overall community. The two major rights-of-way that influence the Village of Alsip land use pattern are the I-294 expressway and the Burlington North Santa Fe (BNSF) railroad. Both of these require a significant amount of right-of-way that breaks up the village visually, physically, and in some cases perceptually.

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Many of the residents often complain about being affected by the noise, odors, chemical emissions, traffic, parking, and operations of company's association with railroads. (comingcleaninc.org) The various GIS maps from the National Transportation Atlas illustrate the number of "rail crossing" which are in close proximity to the Alsip's residential communities. By continuing to permit a more human-centered, customer-focused, market-based approach to railroading, the Staggers Act has greatly benefited railroads, their customers, and our economy at large, just as Congress intended when it passed the legislation. Finally, since 1980, freight railroads have poured nearly \$740 billion of their own funds back into their operations to create the best freight rail network in the world and are continuing to innovate for an even safer and more efficient future. (AAR)

In addition to the addressing the questions provided in the "model letter to the STB", the Village of Alsip leadership respectfully request that the Surface Transportation Board (STB/Board) review the Alsip's pro's and con's, requests, key findings and research. We believe that our findings will directly impact the public interest, environmental issues and the overall "quality of life" the resident of Alsip and the surrounding region.

Snapshot of Pro's and Con's:

- **Pros:** Connect with surrounding Chicagoland region will increase of goods and services delivered, increase jobs within the railroad industry and surrounding communities. Potential for new industrial/commercial business in Alsip.
- **Cons:** Elevated pollution levels, increase current train crossing delays, increase current traffic congestion and decrease pedestrian safety, decrease automobile safety and possible decrease property values near the rail lines and crossing.

Village of Alsip's request and concerns:

- The National Transportation Atlas GIS maps illustrates the number of "rail crossings" located in the Village of Alsip. This confirms and supports the need an overpass constructed at 123rd St, but the Kostner Ave. crossing is within 2 blocks of the 123rd Street crossing, so this would mean an overpass at approx. ¼ mile long.
- **According to CN**, "giving back is not a slogan – it's our way of doing business; the only way". The Village of Alsip would be very excited to talk to CN's representative about partnering and educational initiatives.
- **Create jobs and workforce development opportunities** for the residents of Alsip and the surrounding areas. Consider creating a "community benefits agreement" and partnering with existing workforce development programs such as the "Chicago Southland Economic Development Corporation".

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• **Rail Chokepoints:** Whether a particular town has a rail line running through it, or a freight rail line creates roadway chokepoints for Village of Alsip and neighboring towns, the impact stemming from 25% of U.S. rail freight touching the Chicagoland region each day is significant in the daily lives of millions living in the region.

• **Greener Freight:** The Village of Alsip understand and is supports “reducing freight’s impact on greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) and cut local air pollution.” Alsip’s leadership is looking at ways to “urge your logistics service providers to use cleaner trucks and cargo handling equipment, and employ other air various principles for “Greener Freight.” According to the World Economic Forum, heavy duty truck account for the dominant share of all logistic-related greenhouse gas (GHG) emission. (see graphic on P.5)

Village of Alsip Economic Development and Transportation key takeaways:

- The Village of Alsip understands the economic impact privately-owned freight and that America’s privately-owned freight railroads are the most productive and cost-effective in the world, connecting consumers and businesses across the country and the world while benefitting the environment and promoting safety.
- The Village of Alsip’s leadership understand the benefit of shifting freight from trucks to rail. The fact is that a single freight train can replace several hundred trucks, freeing up space on the highway for other motorists. Shifting freight from trucks to rail also reduces highway wear and tear and the pressure to build costly new highways.
- According to a 2011 Illinois DOT and CSX press release, the *CREATE project B12* added a third main line of rail track and updated signals from 123rd St. to the Cal Sag Channel. Additionally, a new rail bridge was constructed over 127th Street. This project will alleviate congestion for the 77 freight trains that use that track each day. Trains destined to the Blue Island Yards to the east had to wait at this location for access to the yards, creating main line congestion. The third main line track will provide additional capacity for through movements around trains waiting for yard access. The \$19.5 million project was funded with federal funds from the 2005 federal transportation bill, along with railroad contributions,

In conclusion, I respectfully request that the STB review and seriously consider the Village of Alsip’s finding in this critical analysis and other regional concerns before the approval of CN’s Voting Trust motion. Finally, all these impacts should help determine whether a CN-KCS merger is truly in the public interest of the region. Thank you for your careful consideration of my concerns and those of the residents of Village of Alsip, IL.

Sincerely,

John D Ryan, Village President



Source: Source: https://maps.dot.gov/BTS/National_Transportation_Atlas



View: Close-up view of Alsip rail road crossings and surrounding communities.
 Source: https://maps.dot.gov/BTS/National_Transportation_Atlas/