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July 21, 2021

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

Dear Ms. Brown:

As the Mayor of Carbondale whose constituents depend on Amtrak's service along the Illini and Saluki lines, I am writing to express my view on Canadian National's (CN) proposed acquisition of Kansas City Southern (KCS).

Recently, President Biden issued an Executive Order stating that the federal government should consider the effect of a proposed freight merger on Amtrak services when determining whether a railroad merger is in the public interest.

It is important to note that Canadian National has a track record of poor service and delays on Amtrak's passenger trains in Illinois. In the last decade, Amtrak has filed two complaints with regulators in an effort to improve performance on their Illinois lines – however, despite years of litigation, passenger service on Canadian National's lines through Illinois remain among the worst in the industry. In fact, a 2019 Amtrak Inspector General report highlighted the dismal on time performance along the Illini and Saluki lines in particular, with as low as 6 percent on time performance on one northbound route.

In their testimony during the past decade of litigation, CN officers in their own words described limited capacity and increased freight traffic as reasons for Amtrak passenger service delays, including, "...the greatest issues by far affecting the performance of that service are a lack of sufficient infrastructure to avoid traffic congestion and the perpetuation of unrealistic schedules" ¹ and "If freight traffic continues to grow as expected, the freight delay costs attributable to Amtrak are likely to increase more rapidly as remaining areas of excess capacity that CN can use to manage traffic growth are exhausted." ²

I fear that a CN-KCS combination would mean more traffic, more congestion, and exacerbate an already frustrating situation for many of my constituents who depend on the Illini and Saluki lines.



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I urge the Board to conduct a thorough review on how a CN-KCS deal would impact the already poor performance of Amtrak service in the region.

Sincerely,



John M. Henry, Mayor
City of Carbondale Illinois

CC: All Parties of Record

¹ National Railroad Passenger Corp. – Section 213 Investigation of Substandard Performance on Rail Lines of Canadian National Ry., Docket No. NOR 42134, CN's Answer to Amtrak's Amended Complaint (filed Jan. 8, 2015) at 8.

² Application of the National Railroad Passenger Corp. Under 49 U.S.C. § 24308(a) – Canadian National Ry., Finance Docket No. 35743, Opening Evidence of Illinois Central R.R. & Grand Trunk Western R.R., Verified Statement of Anne Morehouse (filed Sept. 4, 2015) at 5.