



EI-31648

LeClaire Chamber of Commerce

PO Box 35 - LeClaire, Iowa 52753

DATE: December 28, 2021

TO: Joshua Wayland, Surface Transportation Board c/o VHB
Attention: Environmental Filing
Docket No: FD 36500
940 Main Campus Dr., Suite 500
Raleigh, NC 27606

FROM: Kathleen Anderson, President
LeClaire Chamber of Commerce

Background of LeClaire:

LeClaire, IA, was founded in 1834 by Antoine LeClaire and is the birthplace of Buffalo Bill Cody. The town was home to river pilots who made their living navigating the hazardous river rapids where the Mississippi River takes a sharp bend in LeClaire.

Today, LeClaire has 4,710 residents who call LeClaire home. The city attracts residents, businesses and visitors with the natural beauty of the Mississippi River, a thriving business climate and high quality of life. This is where people come to live, work and play.

The LeClaire Chamber of Commerce respectfully submits the following comments regarding Docket No. FD 36500 seeking authorization for The Canadian Pacific Railway, Limited, (CP) to acquire Kansas City Southern (KCS).

Concerns to Date:

- **Access to Riverfront and Community Assets (Buffalo Bill Museum & Riverboat Twilight)**
The proposed merger could triple the number of trains passing through our small, riverfront community. But there is nothing small about LeClaire. We attract thousands of visitors each year to enjoy the riverfront, shop, dine and attend the full calendar of events (typically along the riverfront). The largest of these events is Tugfest when the river is actually closed to nautical traffic.
These events will be significantly impacted by the number of trains impeding riverfront access.

- **Noise, Pollution and Historic Properties**

As President of the Chamber, I hear from businesses located by the current train tracks about their concerns on noise and pollution they experience in their stores. They know this is part of the downside of their location. However, the increase in train traffic will make these issues more difficult for them. I also want to express my concern for the integrity of some of our oldest, historic buildings when train traffic triples.

- **Business Disruption**

Along with concern for noise and pollution, the riverfront provides prime parking for visitors and is often the location for many of our special events. When people can't park in a small community, they make the choice to go elsewhere. And that is a dual challenge for LeClaire as our main street, Cody Road, is US Highway #67. We also have two significant visitor attractions on the riverfront; The Buffalo Bill Museum and the Riverboat Twilight which depend on this parking. Our businesses are just now recovering from the pandemic. This increase in train traffic will create a pandemic of a different kind for our businesses.

- **Future Riverfront and Downtown Development**

The City's Strategic Plan includes developing the downtown streetscape north of the city and developing the riverfront into a marina/riverfront park. The increased train traffic will limit LeClaire's ability for riverfront development and residents and visitors enjoyment of our historic riverfront.

- **Public Safety**

If people cannot safely access the riverfront, they will not come. I have watched time and time again when families are waiting to cross the train track, children in hand, and trains are traveling through at speeds up at 40 mph. I have sat on the decks of many of our businesses and literally covered children's ears when the piercing train whistles blow. And sometimes my own as the train whistle noise bounces off the buildings.

- **January 3, 2020, Derailment Addendum with Pictures**

On January 3, 2020, LeClaire experienced a miracle. A train derailed and no one was injured or killed. The impact of the derailment remains with us. And the potential for another derailment is of grave concern to our community with increased train traffic, maintenance of the track system and current speed of the trains.

Conclusion:

Like the City of Muscatine has expressed, we recognize the commerce and potential decreased emissions of the proposed merger. However, on behalf of the Chamber of Commerce, we are deeply concerned about the potential economic, recreational, transportation, environmental and quality of life issues the proposed merger will have on our community.

While the merger is referred to as an “economic growth story” with the potential to expand economic opportunities to area communities and businesses, this will not be the case in LeClaire. We know that CP intends to work hard to be a good neighbor and mitigate potential adverse community impacts. We understand that a meeting has occurred in LeClaire and other southeastern Iowa communities to discuss the impacts of the merger.

We ask you to return to LeClaire this spring, summer and fall to witness first-hand the critical importance of safe access to our riverfront. We are a thriving, historic riverfront community. It is our goal to remain a thriving, historic riverfront community.

Misunderstandings are already occurring regarding these issues, and we would like to avoid unnecessary conflict arising from the railway-community proximity. ***Please work with our riverfront communities to pursue common goals that will benefit communities, railways and the country as a whole (FCM-RAC Proximity Initiative, <https://www.railcan.ca/safety/proximity-initiative/>).***

We respectfully request that these impacts be identified and mitigated as part of the merger permitting process. We strongly request that Canadian Pacific work with the City of LeClaire to ensure that our city retains its historic presence along the Mississippi River.

Respectfully,

Kathleen Anderson, President
LeClaire Chamber of Commerce
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ADDENDUM – TRAIN DERAILMENT OF JANUARY 3, 2020





