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Subject: CP-KCS EIS Public Scoping Period - Website Contact
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contact-message : I am a Senior Planner with a regional planning organization whose 4-county region includes Louisa County in far southeastern Iowa. I recently became aware of the merger between Canadian Pacific and Kansas City Southern, and couldn't help but notice on the map of the new combined rail network, that the line between Kansas City and Davenport serves as the sole linkage between the Upper Midwest and Texas, and by extension, Canada and Mexico. Considering that the current freight volume on this line is considerably lower than other mainlines in the surrounding region (such as the BNSF lines running through Burlington and Fort Madison), the prospect of a tri-national connection that is dependent on this one specific line could conceivably cause a massive increase in volume over the long term. I wanted to bring your attention to the Tyson Foods pork plant in Columbus Junction, Iowa. This is by far the largest employer in Louisa County, and its employee and supplier base stretches across multiple neighboring counties. It is situated adjacent to the confluence of the Iowa and Cedar Rivers, and as a result, the only direct roadway link to all points south of the plant (including residential neighborhoods in Columbus Junction) is the State Highway 70 bridge over the Iowa River. Beyond this point, southbound traffic is entirely dependent on two at-grade railroad crossings, one of which is on Highway 70 itself. In my opinion, if rail traffic is expected to substantially increase through this area, it is essential to consider the option of a grade-separate crossing for Highway 70, which due to the presence of a floodplain in this area, would have to be in the form of a bridge. In such a case, I would urge CPKC to coordinate with the Iowa Department of Transportation, as well as Tyson Foods, to actively explore this option. There may be viable funding opportunities for a project of this nature in the coming years, thanks largely to the new Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act at the federal level. I figure that there are also similar prospects for adding grade-separate crossings elsewhere along the line in southeastern Iowa, such as Muscatine or Ottumwa. Thank you for providing the opportunity for public comment on this matter. Jarred Lassiter Senior Planner Southeast Iowa Regional Planning Commission
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