

I am concerned about the proposed merger of the Canadian Pacific / Kansas City Rail Lines. The proposed increase in train traffic from 4 trains per day, to 18 trains per day, and double the speed of these trains increases the risk of train related incidents exponentially.

- There are 3 communities in Louisa County, Iowa; Columbus Junction, Fredonia, and Letts, that will have Emergency Services in jeopardy with this increased train traffic
- In just the past 2 months, Canadian Pacific has had at least 2 incidents of locomotive mechanical issues that block critical roads in our county for more than 1 hour.
- There are frequent instances where Canadian Pacific trains block critical roads in Letts, Iowa for more than 45 minutes. The level of response and concern from Canadian Pacific is marginal.
- There is a crossing in Columbus Junction, Iowa on Hwy 70 with heavy semi-trailer traffic carrying hogs to a nearby processing plant – and the increased traffic could back up this traffic on the local highway.
- The public is barely aware of the details and impacts of this merger – and not aware of the Comment Process and deadline.

Comparison scenario for the increased traffic and speed:

Train traffic is expected to increase from 4 trains to 18 trains daily, and speeds expected to double. Hwy 92 runs parallel to the train track for much of its path through Louisa County, Iowa; and specific to this comparison – through Columbus Junction, Iowa. The comparison would be for us to increase the traffic on Hwy 92 in Columbus Junction city limits from 5000 vehicle at 35 mph – to 20,000 vehicles per day going 70 miles per hour – and every vehicle blowing their horn like the trains do. This scenario would not be allowed by the Iowa DOT.

The increased concern and risk of disaster is felt in every community along the Canadian Pacific Railroad. The STB will not hear these concerns before the closing period for this application. Each of the effected towns in Louisa County, Iowa have very small populations by comparison, and their ability to be heard will be lost against the huge train industry. The equity and consideration due them will not be part of the Cost Benefit Ration used to help these communities prepare for the pounding about to happen.

The STB should also be looking at the National risk factor. When the meat processing plants were shut down during the COVID pandemic – it crippled the food supply chain across the country. Today, because of huge corporate monopolies, there is a critical baby formula shortage. What will happen if this merger and increase in moving critical commodities by rail is halted for a week or more from a derailment. Will the coal trains still be able to get to our power plant ?

I have a strong concern that Canadian Pacific can barely manage the traffic of the current level of operation, and the forward momentum of this merger will cause irreversible consequence for the citizens along the tracks.