



West Salem Volunteer Fire Department

100 South Mill Street • West Salem, WI 54669
Non-Emergency (608) 786-0111 • Email: base660@hotmail.com



7/20/2022

United State Surface Transportation Board
395 East Street, SW
Washington, DC 20423

RE: FD 36500 – Canadian Pacific/Kansas City Southern Merger

Dear Director Gosselin:

West Salem and surrounding communities in La Crosse County currently experience heavy rail traffic through its communities. And according to a 2020 Trains.com article, "Rail traffic is on the increase." La Crosse County currently has BNSF, Canadian Pacific and Amtrak running the rails every day of the week. La Crosse County communities experience 40 to 50 freight trains carrying everything from frac sand to crude oil to coal daily. In addition, the Amtrak's Empire Builder makes a couple daily stops in both the morning and evening.

While trains are necessary for the economic benefit of our region and country, they are also extremely dangerous for community members at-grade crossings and have the potential to adversely affect first responders' response time.

As the West Salem Fire Chief, both items identified above are my responsibility. And both require time and attention for our volunteer personnel. If the recent news stories are accurate and the US Surface Transportation Board (STB) is considering a merger between Canadian Pacific and Kansas City Southern rail that would increase the number of trains and length of trains, I would ask the STB to take a very critical view of this merger from the perspective of first responders as well as the health and safety of community members that would be most affected by such an increase in train activity. If the STB determines that first responder delays to calls and health and safety risks increase, then the STB should oppose the merger.

On behalf of the West Salem Fire Department, thank you for your consideration of our perspective on the proposed merger between Canadian Pacific and Kansas City Southern rail.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dave Munson".

Dave Munson
West Salem Fire Chief