



Marinette Fire Department

September 22, 2022

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

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

Dear Director Gosselin:

As a member of the public safety community and Fire Chief for the community I call home, I am writing to underscore my concern about the pending merger between Canadian Pacific and Kansas City Southern railways. Public safety should be among the highest priorities when the merits of a proposal like this are analyzed, and it is my fear that the United States Surface Transportation Board's review process has not adequately considered the potential safety impacts of this merger.

It has come to my attention that the draft environmental impact statement ordered by the Surface Transportation Board provided no insight or analysis in the area of public safety. This is disappointing and appears, to me, to leave a meaningful gap in the Board's ability to determine the future of the project.

First responders are acutely aware of the risks posed by railroad crossings. At-grade crossings, in particular, deserve the highest possible degree of scrutiny given both the potential for traffic incidents at the crossing itself and the possibility that lengthy delays as trains pass through could interfere with the ability to respond to other, unrelated incidents. I can speak to this first hand as I have a rail line that cuts through the center of my city and has resulted in both delayed emergency responses, numerous crossings being blocked, and snarled traffic situations. For first responders, speed at crossings can determine whether or not an emergency can be reached quickly and resolved. For me, and likely every other public safety professional in communities like mine, the prospect of trading public safety for railroad profits is inconceivable.

Members of Wisconsin communities don't question the need for or value of freight railroad. But we need to know more about this project's true impact on public safety. The Surface Transportation Board needs to address this and review and analyze public safety in the environmental impact statement before it makes a final decision on the merger. Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Jay Heckel
Marinette Fire Chief