

Sun Prairie Fire & Rescue Company

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

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

Dear Director Gosselin:

Fire departments serving the communities here in Wisconsin and across the nation are facing drastically higher demand and calls for service – and doing so amid diminished availability of firefighters and dwindling budgets. This pressure is very real, and it is a source for real concern for me and a number of other public safety officials.

My department, like so many others, is operating at – or even beyond – our capacity. We are doing all we can to keep our city safe, and to date, we have been successful in providing the members of our community with the highest possible quality of service and protection. We are steadfastly committed to maintaining this level of service, but it is critical to understand that additional strain on our department and our community will place considerable pressure on our ability to do our job.

The proposed Canadian Pacific/Kansas City Southern merger presents serious concerns, and I fear that it creates a significant degree of additional risk for both first responders and the public.

Reporting surrounding the proposed merger makes it clear that, if approved, existing railroad lines running through Wisconsin communities will see more trains daily. Those trains will also be longer – up to 2.25 miles long. In communities with at-grade railroad crossings, a 2.25-mile-long train means a delay of several minutes for automobile traffic, not to mention risk for foot traffic, nearby businesses, and other innocent bystanders.

Such a delay at a railroad crossing will also affect the ability of fire departments and other first responders to make their way to and from emergencies. Each individual instance of delayed response brings huge implications for those directly involved – both emergency personnel and victims. Taken together, the prospect for ongoing, daily delays only adds to the pressures faced by already-strained fire departments like mine.

The U.S. Surface Transportation Board is responsible for understanding the *total* impact of this proposed merger before it renders a full decision. I am writing today to state, that public safety must be at the top of the list of factors considered before a decision is made. I understand that the draft impact statement did not consider public safety, and I find this omission to be both worrisome and disappointing.

Please take the time to understand what this merger means for the towns that will be impacted before you decide.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Chris Garrison". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Chris Garrison
Sun Prairie Fire Chief