



HOUSTON PROFESSIONAL FIRE FIGHTERS

ASSOCIATION LOCAL 341

EST. 1932

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

FD 36500: Merger Canadian Pacific/Kansas City Southern Rail Roads

To Whom It May Concern:

The Houston Professional Fire Fighters Association, Local 341, is deeply concerned about the impact on our city if the proposed merger between the Canadian Pacific and Kansas City Southern railroads is approved by the Surface Transportation Board. Houston has a long and proud history as an oil city and a major railroad hub.

However, our members protect the citizens of the nation's fourth largest city from fire, hazardous materials, all forms of disaster and provide emergency medical services. We are concerned that the merger will add additional hazards that may jeopardize public safety and compromise the response time of emergency responders. Our sole concern is public safety.

Currently, two to six million gallons of Bakken oil flows through Houston on a weekly basis. By certain estimates if the merger is approved there will be up to a 32% increase in the flow of rail traffic through Houston's rail terminal. We are concerned that there will be a capacity issue that will create congestion and increase the risk of derailments or other accidents.

These trains are projected to be over 10,000 feet in length. A train of this size may take over thirty minutes to pass by an at-grade train crossing. Responding emergency and law enforcement vehicles will be seriously delayed imperiling the safety of those needing our services.

In 2015, a train derailed at Old Katy Road in Houston with two train cars tumbling onto the road. Fortunately, the cargo was not hazardous, and no one was injured. However, train derailments, accidents and fires have claimed lives, caused massive evacuation and environmental damage in Lac Magantic, Quebec, Weyauwega, WI, Aliceville, AL and Casselton, ND. The loss of life and property would be greatly magnified if similar incidents occurred in a large urban area.

Houston Fire Fighters strongly urges the Surface Transportation Board to move slowly on the proposal and ensure that all public safety concerns have been addressed before moving forward.

Respectfully,

Patrick "Marty" Lancton
President