

PROFESSIONAL FIRE FIGHTERS OF WISCONSIN, INC.

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MEMBER OF INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE FIGHTERS

MEMBER OF WISCONSIN STATE AFL-CIO

**MAHLON MITCHELL**
STATE PRESIDENT**MICHAEL WOODZICKA**
STATE VICE-PRESIDENT**STEVE WILDING**
STATE SEC. / TREAS.

October 12, 2022

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

To Whom It May Concern:

The Professional Fire Fighters of Wisconsin joins with our managerial counterparts and fire departments across the state in opposing the proposed mergers between Canadian Pacific and Kansas City Southern Rail Roads

Our opposition is routed in one issue: public safety. The economics and propriety of this merger can be debated by others. As fire fighters, our singular mission is the protection of lives and property.

There are two fundamental issues which directly impact communities and safety of our members and the citizens we proudly serve. The first and most obvious is the threat of derailment and catastrophic spillage and fire. The tragic 2013 derailment and fire which killed 47 people in Lac Megantic, Quebec is testimony to risks associated with this mode of transporting petroleum products.

As a native of Wisconsin, I well remember the Weyauwega derailment in 1996. Thankfully, no lives were lost, but 3,000 were evacuated from their homes for several weeks.

A less dramatic threat will be the increasing number and size of these trains. Certain estimates suggest that there will be several dozen additional trains traversing the rails from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico on a daily basis. Canadian Pacific routinely operates trains that are 1.7 to 2.3 miles in length. As trains of this size pass through small communities, the time it takes to pass an at-grade rail crossing can exceed thirty minutes. In the event of a fire, medical emergency or other response, delays of this duration can prove deadly.

Our association, which represents over 4,000 professional fire fighters in over 100 communities across the state, urges the Surface Transportation Board to base your decision on safeguarding our communities and citizens and reject this proposed merger.

Respectfully,

Mahlon Mitchell
President