

This merger exclusively benefits the railroad. There are NO benefits for the city, residents, businesses, or the environment. A merger like this should benefit all parties impacted. Our city has built a tourism industry over the past few decades focusing on the Mississippi River and our levee. This merger is a detriment financially, with increased noise pollution and additional safety risk. We have many events on the levee with thousands of people attending. A derailment like the one on 1/3/20 could cost thousands of lives.

The railroad used strong arm tactics to get the cities to agree to the money offered. They said if you don't accept this offer, you may not get any money. The railroads should not have been allowed to prohibit cities from stating negative views to qualify for this money. This position caused city administrators and elected officials to operate in a non-open way with residents and to favor something that is detrimental to the city, residents, tourists, and surrounding cities. They used tactics to prevent these parties working together to stop the merger because the end result would be the detriments outweigh any benefits.

The railroad is not taking any responsibility for safety, they expect these towns to use the money to mitigate any safety concerns cities may have. Public safety must be a priority and you should make the railroad mitigate these issues before any merger can happen.

The money for LeClaire is about \$150 per resident. I would have been glad to pay that amount to the city rather than have this merger. Every resident I spoke to agreed. There is not one benefit for the residents of the city. Some are not impacted directly in their homes as we and many others are (the noise will reduce property values along with reducing our quality of life) but they are indeed affected as their town will be negatively impacted financially. As property values decline along the tracks and tourism suffers due to noise pollution and safety concerns, the city will lose tax revenue and be forced to raise the property tax levy rate impacting all residents. A one-time payment will not last forever but this merger will.

This merger will increase noise pollution. Each train may make the same noise as the train before it but that is not the measure of the cumulative effect of the noise of each of train. People say you get used to it, it isn't a cuckoo clock. I have lived across Highway 67 from the tracks 30 years and have never kept windows open because of train noise. The EIS fails to identify relevant receptors here. Currently, there may be one or two trains during any one event on the levee. People can cover their ears once or twice, but triple the number of trains and it will ruin all festivals and activities on the riverfront.

You have not given adequate consideration for environmental impacts. The highest increase in rail traffic due to this merger will be right by the Nahant marsh, the largest wetland on the upper Mississippi. One gallon of oil contaminates a million gallons of water. This is nothing but a Keystone pipeline on wheels. They will transport 2.7 million gallons of oil at over 40 mph. What about the trains traveling through the flood plain? Please address this issue. These tracks have been under water 360 plus days in the past ten years.

With these longer trains, there is an increased risk of the train block the crossings, this will prevent emergency responders from accessing those living on the river or walking along the river. This happened recently in Davenport and a boat from Illinois collected the person and took them to an Illinois hospital. This is not possible in most of the towns along this merger.

It used to be these trains came through each town and stopped. People rode the trains and it benefitted these towns/cities. Now it is all freight. Only the railroads benefit while leaving the cities and their stakeholders with a lower quality of life.

I want you to stop this merger. If you don't, then you need to have all mitigation completed before the merger, have a plan to lower the noise of the trains, limit use of the whistle, increase inspections for public safety and require them to pay money annually for damage to infrastructure near tracks that occurs from vibration and cover lost revenue from lower property values and fewer businesses.