

Mr. Martin Oberman, Chair
Surface Transportation Board
395 E. Street
Washington DC 20403

Dear Mr. Oberman,

I am writing to oppose the merger of the Canadian Pacific and Kansas City Southern railroads. There are a multitude of problems and concerns of this merger that will be a negative impact to my community, Davenport, IA, and many other communities where this railroad track is located.

I am a lifelong bicyclist and value the environmental amenities provided in our Davenport, IA community. I experience and see firsthand the impact tourism brings to our community through our Mississippi Riverfront. On our Mississippi River Trail, I see countless bikers, walkers and runners. I see fishermen and boaters launching their water craft. I see families and individuals enjoying the Mississippi Riverfront together, picnics, cookouts, visiting the playgrounds, Sprayground, concerts, festivals, attending athletic events. The increase in railroad traffic created by this merger will decrease the value and access to these amenities that make our community stronger, both financially and welcoming.

I have also experienced tragedy while on the riverfront. Personally, assisting a pedestrian who tumbled and fell, hitting her head rendering her unconscious. Calling for emergency help was vital and we were fortunate at the time there was not a train on the track, as it would have prevented necessary lifesaving measures. I've also assisted a bicyclist that needed medical attention. The merger, by creating an increase in railroad traffic, will impede the safety our community.

I am also a resident who lives in a home approximately 50 feet from a railroad track. I fully understand the detrimental impact on the environment the merger will create by the increased train traffic. Our sturdy brick and mortar home requires regular maintenance to repair cracks in our ceiling, walls and foundation that comes from the speeding, lengthy trains that pass by us and cause our house to shake. Our community cannot handle more of this decay caused by increased railroad traffic.

I work and live in an underserved Davenport neighborhood, serving youth and their families. We provide educational support, recreational activities and social-emotion experiences for children in grades K-12. We value having a beautiful Mississippi Riverfront four blocks away from our site and the neighborhoods where our families live. I know firsthand how our families visit the riverfront to have an affordable (free) place to visit. We make use of the bike path, Sprayground, playground, dog park, concerts, athletic fields and peaceful parks to enhance physical fitness, mental health and building relationships with our children and fostering healthy families. The increased railroad traffic that will be created by the Canadian Pacific and Kansas City Southern railroad merger will be an obstacle and detriment to all that is good with our Mississippi Riverfront.

If this merger takes place, the family friendly tourism that the Mississippi Riverfront attracts will decrease. Creating this barricade due to the merger will decay the financial impact on our community. Our inner-city neighborhoods already face challenges and are overcoming years of disinvestment. Now, with this impending merger, those who already have suffered the brunt of these obstacles will have yet another undesirable consequence imposed on them by the Canadian Pacific and Kansas City Southern merger.

I may not feel so dejected had there been a positive relationship with the railroad in our community. However, this has not historically been the case. In 2020, while our community was suffering from the pandemic, we also had severe flooding taking place, temporarily, in downtown Davenport. It was at this time the railroad came in and raised the railroad track bed several feet so their trains could continue operating through our community. They would like you to believe they raised it "approximately 18 inches" but that was not the case. There were places it was three feet higher than the road and bike path. This blocked access to our riverfront and impeded traffic in the City of Davenport. Additionally, this was during a time vital to our community to have more outdoor access and recreation to support our mental and physical health!

Most recently, last weekend – Labor Day weekend, as I went for a bicycle ride on the Mississippi River Trail I came across a section where the railroad had completed installation of new equipment adjacent to the bike path. Unfortunately, they left an environmental mess as the photos included in this letter will show. I was deeply saddened by the condition of the bike path and the detraction it created for anyone visiting our Mississippi River Trail, especially during Labor Day weekend, a time know for many outdoor activities! The area they worked in created the ground to wash and cover the bike path in mud up to 8 inches in areas. Myself and several other bikers, walkers and joggers had to take our chances to slog through the mud, go around which required actually walking on the railroad bed or stop our activity and turn around. How discouraging to our local community and to any visitors trying to enjoy healthy and family friendly activities.

Thank you for taking time to read my letter. I know I am only one person, but I speak for countless other people in my neighborhood that are unable to advocate for themselves or our community. I am sure there are several other situations similar to this in many communities adjacent to this proposed railroad merger. I appreciate your careful consideration of keeping our communities safe and vibrant.

Sincerely,



Ann Schwickerath
906 W. 5th Street
Davenport, IA 52802
563-940-0809

