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November 4, 2024

Federal Surface Transportation Board
Attn: Chairperson Robert E. Primus
395 E Street SW
Washington, D.C. 20423

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Dear Members of the Surface Transportation Board,

Docket No. FD 36744

On behalf of the City of Waterloo, Iowa, I am writing to express our strong support for the proposed acquisition of Iowa Northern Railroad Company (IANR) by the Canadian National Railway (CN). This acquisition presents a significant opportunity for our community, offering numerous economic, environmental, and infrastructural benefits that align with our city's growth and sustainability goals.

Waterloo has a long-standing relationship with the IANR, and its integration into CN's expansive network promises to enhance our connectivity to national and international markets. The acquisition is anticipated to improve freight service reliability, increase efficiency, and expand capacity, which will directly benefit local businesses and industries by reducing transportation costs and improving access to key markets.

This decision holds particular significance as it comes at a critical juncture for our city as we initiate in the process of a Request for Proposal (RFP) to select a consultant for the Waterloo Railyard Study. This study, funded through a Federal Grant from the Neighborhood Access & Equity program, aims to assess and improve rail infrastructure in Waterloo. CN's acquisition of IANR has created a unique opportunity to analyze how these two railroads will further establish seamless integration into one cohesive network. A timely decision on this acquisition will provide essential context and stability as we embark on this comprehensive study, ensuring that our planning efforts are aligned with the enhanced rail network and capabilities under CN's stewardship.

Moreover, CN's commitment to safety and environmental stewardship aligns well with Waterloo's priorities. We believe CN's investment in modern infrastructure and sustainable practices will enhance the safety of our rail systems and contribute to environmental conservation efforts.

The economic impact of this acquisition is substantial. Improved rail service will attract new businesses, create jobs, and stimulate local economic development. Additionally, the partnership is expected to alleviate road congestion by shifting more freight transport to rail, thereby reducing wear and tear on our highways and lowering greenhouse gas emissions.



In conclusion, the City of Waterloo strongly supports the acquisition of Iowa Northern Railroad Company by Canadian National Railway. We urge the Surface Transportation Board to approve this transaction, as it will bring significant benefits to our community and provide a solid foundation for the forthcoming Waterloo Railyard Study. Further delay would come as a detriment to the City of Waterloo's ability to leverage future Federal assistance available in the BIL/IIJA and the opportunity for correction of social injustice from decades' past.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Quentin Hart, Mayor