



STODDARD / BERGEN VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

188 NORTH MAIN STREET
STODDARD, WISCONSIN 54658



July 6, 2022

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

RE: FD 36500 – Canadian Pacific/Kansas City Southern Merger

Dear Director Gosselin:

The US Surface Transportation Board (STB) will soon decide whether to approve the merger between Canadian Pacific and Kansas City Southern railroads. In my opinion, it is important that the STB make a greater effort to research and analyze the health and safety risks of increased rail traffic on at-grade crossings and the increased response time for emergency responders blocked or delayed by increased rail traffic.

Since 1943 the Stoddard Bergen Fire Department has been serving the Village of Stoddard, the Township of Bergen, and surrounding communities. Our priority has always been the safety and well-being of our community members.

As a small department that provides fire protection and EMS services that relies exclusively on volunteer professionals, it is incumbent that each member of the Stoddard Bergen department has unobstructed access TO and FROM the stations when they are called to emergencies. The railroad has a single crossing in our community. Blocking that crossing will create an island of ½ of the Village of Stoddard since the Mississippi River would surround it.

With active and repeated train traffic that runs throughout our community and the areas in which we provide emergency response, any increase in train length and frequency only delays our department staff from reaching the station when called and departing the station to provide a time-sensitive response. We do not want to experience what another Mississippi River community – Winona, Minnesota, has experienced. According to recent reports, the average Canadian Pacific train in 2021 was 8,285 feet, or over 1.5 miles, and can exceed 12,000 feet, or 2.25 miles. This resulted in a 10-minute average wait at an at-grade crossing into a 40-minute wait. As the Fire Chief of this community, I cannot turn a blind eye to that possibility and how our department will be able to provide a quick and quality response when delayed an additional 30 minutes.

Please review this potential merger by considering the first responders' perspective and mission. If the results and data conclude that the merger will adversely affect fire/EMS services, we respectfully request rejecting the merger in the name of public health and safety.

Sincerely,

Joseph W. Pfaff

Fire Chief/NR AEMT
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