

United States Senate

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Chairwoman Ann Begeman
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20423

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Dear Chairwoman Begeman:

I am writing in support of the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) and the Village of Barrington's recently filed petition calling on the Surface Transportation Board (STB) to extend its oversight period for the Canadian National Railroad (CN) and urging CN to institute additional grade crossing mitigation measures.

As you know, CN has been under an STB oversight period since CN's controversial acquisition of the EJ&E Railway Company (EJ&E) in 2009. The monitoring period was put in place to ensure CN fully complied with the promises it made to mitigate any negative effects the acquisition had on surrounding communities. While some progress has been made over the last several years in addressing community concerns, CN's increased rail traffic on the EJ&E continues to negatively impact several suburban Illinois communities and the broader regional rail system. The increase in the duration of blocked crossings by rail traffic is of particular concern at the US Highway 14 crossing in Barrington. This crossing is the only Federal highway in Illinois that does not have a single grade separation from the EJ&E line. As a critical component of the Chicagoland Strategic Regional Network, it provides both long-distance connections to U.S. Interstate 90 and regional connections for residents and businesses.

Nearly half of our nation's intermodal shipments go through Chicago every year, including nearly a quarter of the country's freight. Since 2009, the average number of trains that go through Barrington has nearly tripled. In light of this level of freight traffic, I believe it is important that the STB extend its oversight period to ensure CN is operating safely and honoring its commitments to protect the quality of life for families living along the EJ&E. The creation of an additional grade crossing would promote safe and efficient rail service, which is vital to the Illinois economy and to the livelihood of impacted communities.

The STB can help communities like Barrington by continuing to practice rigorous oversight of railroads whose rail service continues to produce significant safety and economic impacts for their residents. Extending its oversight period until January 2019 will help to ensure CN meets its commitments to impacted communities in Illinois.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator