



EO-887

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
Washington, DC 20423

Section of Environmental Analysis

April 14, 2008

Ron Ries
Staff Director
Federal Railroad Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Re: STB Finance Docket No. 35087: Canadian National Railway Company and Grand Trunk Corporation - Control - EJ&E West Company

Dear Mr. Ries,

The Surface Transportation Board's (Board) Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) is in the early phases of preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed Canadian National Railway Company and Grand Trunk Corporation (CM) acquisition of the EJ&E West Company, a subsidiary of Elgin Joliet and Eastern Railway Company (EJ&E). EJ&E currently operates over 198 miles of track in northeastern Illinois and northwestern Indiana, primarily consisting of an arc of approximately 120 miles around Chicago as follows'

- » From Waukegan, Illinois, southward to Joliet, Illinois
- » From Joliet eastward to Gary, Indiana
- » From Gary northwest to South Chicago along Lake Michigan

The proposed transaction primarily involves the acquisition of a major portion of the EJ&E railroad right-of-way and three yard facilities: Kirk Yard located in Gary, Indiana, Whiting Yard in Whiting, Indiana, and East Joliet Yard in Joliet, Illinois. The proposed acquisition would also include the construction of six new rail connections at Munger, Joliet, and Matteson, Illinois; Griffith and Ivanhoe, Indiana; and Kirk Yard in Gary, Indiana. In addition, a 10.1 mile long segment of double track between the north end of East Siding and the west end of Walker, Illinois is planned; the remstallation of double track between East Joliet and Frankfort, Illinois is also proposed, and at Leighton, Illinois a 2.3 mile extension of the existing siding is planned. Figure 1 displays the proposed rail line acquisition, the locations of the proposed six new connections, and the proposed sidings extensions and double tracking. The area of interest includes all of the EJ&E line segments, all CN line segments within the EJ&E arc, and CN line segments within a five mile distance outside of the EJ&E arc,

SEA has been able to ascertain a general understanding of the quiet zones within the project limits utilizing available resources including: FRA's Final Rule on the Use of Locomotive Horns at Highway-Rail Grade Crossings", information provided by the Illinois Commerce Commission; current ADT traffic levels; aerial photography; field verification and telephone interviews with lead agencies of established proposed quiet zones. However, SEA would like to have the FRA help in verifying the data that we have collected.

SEA would like to request a meeting with the FRA to discuss current information needs and to open a line of communication between appropriate staff at FRA and SEA. In particular, we are interested

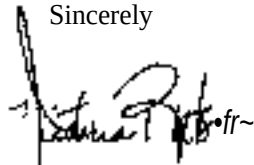
m understanding the affected environment as it relates lo quiet zones in the study area and would tike to submit two questions for clarification:

1. If a zone was established on the basis of being below the National Safety Risk Threshold (NSRT), and impacts of this project (additional trains per day) push it above the NSRT, but the risk still lies below the Risk Index with Horns, docs the zone need to be reestablished?
2. If a zone was established on the basis of the Risk Index with Horns for a given train volume, and the volume increases Can the quiet zone remain so long as the'new Quiet Zone Risk Index (QZRI) is below the new Risk Index with Horns, or is the new Q7JRJ measured against the Risk Index with Horns that it was established unde⁹

A list outlining the information that is of interest is attached to assist you in evaluating our request. HDR Engineering, Inc is serving as the third party contractor to the Board supporting SEA in the preparation of the EIS Mike Martinez from HDR will be m contact with your office to organize a meeting as soon as possible at a mutually convenient time. Phillis Johnson-Ball of my staff is serving as SEA's Project Manager for the proceedings. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Philhs Johnson-Ball at (202) 245-0304 fphiUisjohnson-ballfaistb dot gov) Alternatively, you are welcome to coordinate staff-level activity directly with Mike at 763.591 5442 or via email at micfaae|.martme7@hdrinc.com. I can be reached at 202-245-0295 (vjclld.mtson^s^dotgov)

We thank you in advance for your assistance in providing this information.

Sincerely



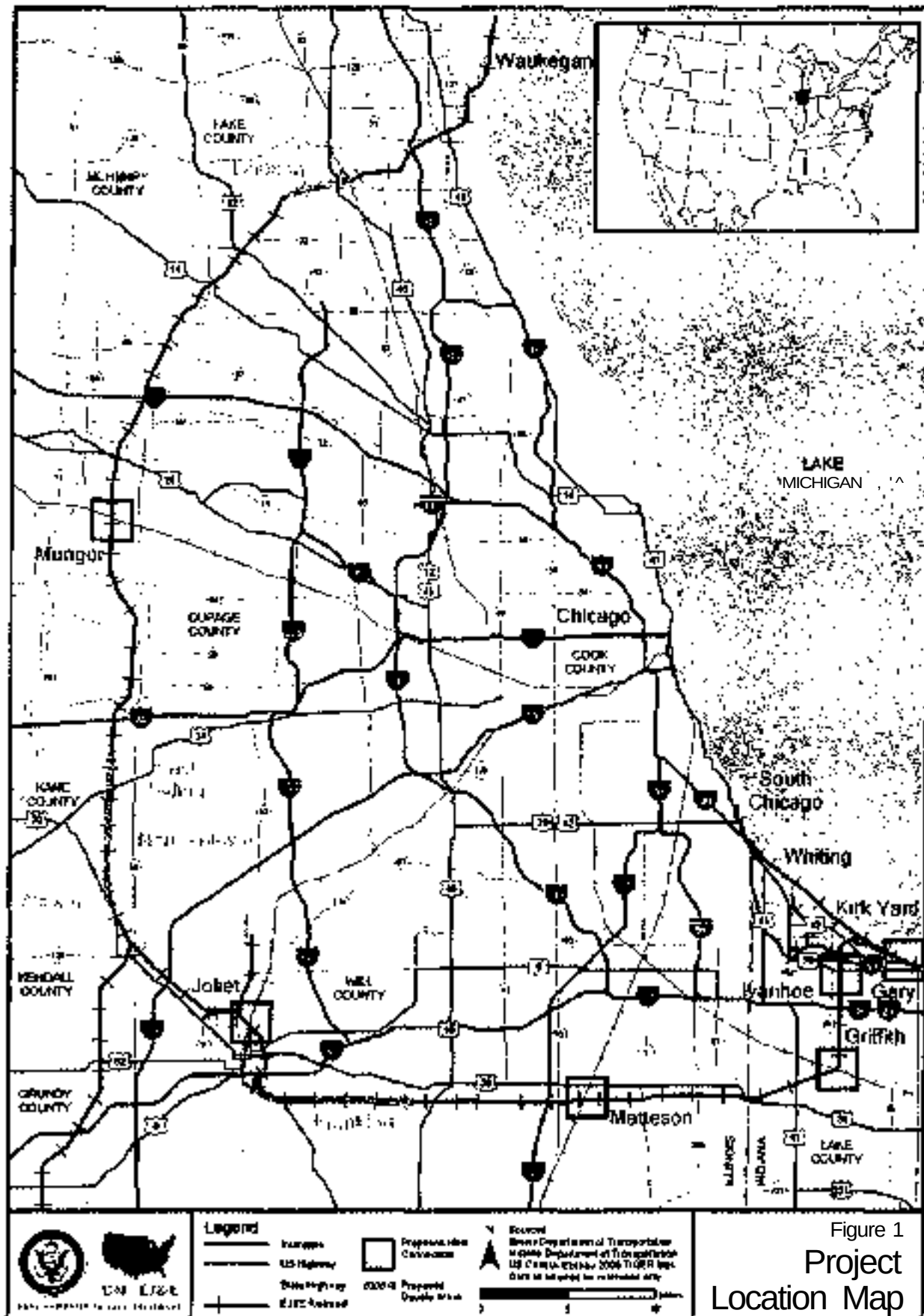
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Section of Environmental Analysis

O Philhs Johnson-Ball, STB
Mike Martinex, HDR Engineering, tnc

Enclosures (2)



Re: STB Finance Docket No. 35087: Canadian National Railway Company and Grand Trunk Corporation - Control - EJ&E West Company

We are seeking the following information from the FRA to assist us in understanding the affected environment as it relates to quiet zones in the study area

1. What is the location of the established quiet zones within the project limits? These include all of the EJ&K lines as well as CN lines located within the EJ&B arc, as well as, 5 miles outward of the EJ&E arc.
 - a. Identify all public at-grade crossings within each zone where horns are routinely silenced.
2. In what year were these zones established?
3. Are there any additional communities that have filed a notice of intent to establish, but are not yet established a quiet zone?
 - a. If so, where are they?
 - i. What are the limits of the proposed zones?
 - ii. What were the dates of these filings?
4. What is the most current Quiet Zone Risk Index (QZRI) data available for these crossings?
 - a. What is the QZRI for each crossing within each zone?
 - b. What is the QZRI for each zone?
 - c. What is the Risk Index with Horns for each zone?
5. Who is the lead agency for each zone (established and those with a notice of intent to establish)?
6. Which crossings in each zone have additional safety measures (SSM's, ASM's, or others) that impact the zone's Risk Index?
 - a. Identify the safety improvement, and the effectiveness rating for each improvement