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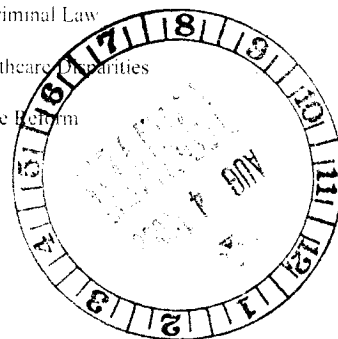
General Assembly
State of Illinois

10066



Committees:

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Computer Technology, Chairman
Health Care Availability & Accessibility
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Judiciary II-Criminal Law
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CONSTANCE A. "CONNIE" HOWARD

State Representative • 34th District

July 30, 2008

The Honorable Vernon A. Williams
Secretary
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20423

Subject: *Canadian National Railway Co., et al – Control – EJ&E
West Company*, STB Finance Docket No. 35087

Dear Secretary Williams:

I represent the 34th Illinois Representative District. I support the proposal by Canadian National Railway Company (CN) to acquire control over the EJ&E West Company (EJ&E).

It is my firm belief, after reviewing all of the transportation impacts of this proposed acquisition, the nation and the Chicago metropolitan region will significantly benefit if CN is allowed to acquire the EJ&E. I, therefore, earnestly request that the Board complete its review process and approve the transaction as soon as possible.

I am particularly pleased to learn that there will be a substantial reduction of train traffic over the CN line through my district from the current level of 22.1 trains per day to 2.9 trains per day on one segment and from 8.4 trains per day to 2 trains per day on another segment of track. This will create excess capacity on the line and reduce environmental impacts including air emissions and noise through my district.

The Chicago region is congested with rail freight traffic. More than a third of all goods and products produced or marketed in the U.S. move on Chicago rails. Each day, 1200 trains traverse the Chicago region. Today it can take a freight train more than 24 hours to move the 30 miles between Chicago's northern and southern city limits.

Projections have freight traffic increasing over the next 20 years at alarming rates. Demand for rail service through Chicago is expected to double in the next 10 years. The EJ&E is an underutilized freight line in the Chicago region and the use of this rail line can provide relief to many communities in the Chicago region, including my district. By offering to acquire the EJ&E, CN is providing the region with a good solution to at least part of the problem of congested rail freight traffic, and this solution will be fully funded and privately funded by CN. This acquisition is vital to maintaining a national

transportation system which functions to best serve the needs of the public and for reducing congestion in the Chicago region.

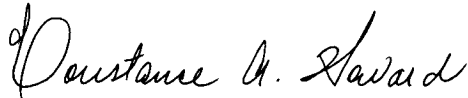
I understand that some of the improvements which CN plans for its rail system are included in the goals of the CREATE project and that this transaction will advance many of the objectives of CREATE more quickly. This is very important to our community.

I recognize that as train traffic moves off of CN's rail lines, some communities along the EJ&E right-of-way will experience train traffic increases. I understand that the STB will be looking at the impacts of this additional traffic in the context of the environmental review process. I have been told by CN that it is reaching out to those communities to identify these issues, and to assist these communities in addressing them as appropriate. I urge the Board to approve CN's proposed target deadlines for completion of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) as the proposed schedule provides ample time for the Board to secure the information it needs. The Board has been undertaking its environmental analysis since December, 2007 and has provided the public the opportunity to be heard. It is time to conclude this process and adopt CN's proposed timetable.

I do not believe that these localized impacts along the EJ&E right-of-way outweigh the significant overall environmental benefits of this transaction much less the transportation benefits of the transaction. I urge the Board to complete its environmental review process expeditiously, and to approve the transaction as in the public interest.

Please enter these comments into the record of this docket.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Constance A. Howard". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Constance A. Howard
Representative – 34th District