

September 26th, 2008

Phillis Johnson-Ball
Surface Transportation Board
395 E. Street S.W.
Washington, DC 20423

Re: STB Finance Docket # 35087

Dear Ms. Johnson-Ball,

As a resident of **New Lenox, IL** a vibrant and expanding community that will be adversely impacted with the increase of train traffic if the proposed purchase of the EJ & J railroad by CN railroad is allowed to proceed, I need to express my concerns to you.

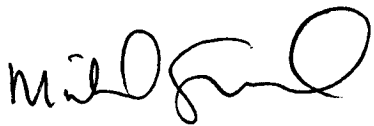
1. Why with our present state of economy would the government of the USA, greatly distress the 100 of thousands residents and all the impacted communities with the millions of dollars cost to mitigate all the crossings, to of all companies, a foreign interest, the CN railroad. I realize we are a global economy, but let's not make communities and taxpayers burden the financial responsibilities so a foreign interest can profit at our expense.
2. With the escalating cost of fuel, commuter traffic on passenger trains has increased greatly. What is the impact to commuters and their employers as increased rail traffic substantially increases commuter rail delays? We have four high schools in the New Lenox district, which has students straddling both sides of the EJ& J tracks. Without the proper North /South egress and mitigation, these students will be stopped on busses for up to 20 minutes waiting at crossings to get to school. Compound that with the likely increase of train accidents, and additional congestion, this is a recipe no parent could ever imagine.
3. It is also my understanding that CN railroad and the STB in their impact study only went 5 years into the future for impact and planning. This is a growing community with a new hospital being built just one mile north of the EJ&J tracks. Guess what? The bulk of New Lenox residents are already south of the tracks, with not one above or below grade crossing any where near our community. Most villages and companies have the foresight and vision to plan out 10 and 25 years into the future, not just 5 short years for something that will impact this area for the next 100 years and beyond.
4. We all understand the need for growth, we recently opened up the I-355 toll way extension just a year ago. They did not try to bring all that traffic on some existing road or street; we built a new toll road. Sure there was impact, but minimal as to the amount of people who can take advantage of it. If the STB feels we need a new train route, build a new line 50 miles south of here. From what I've been told

that would cost about \$300-\$500 million. There are 133 at grade crossings in the proposed 198 mile EJ&J rail purchase. Every $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile is a crossing which would impact people, commuters, students, police and emergency vehicles. In New Lenox alone, the costs would soar up to around \$150 million for mitigation on just 5 crossings.

These are just a few of my concerns regarding the STB ruling on allowing CN railroad to purchase the EJ&J railroad. I urge you, Ms. Johnson-Ball to oppose this buy-out! The theory of a short term gain by the region is just a myth as other railroads will add more traffic to the congestion your trying to ease.

Thank you for taking the time to hear our concerns.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Garand', with a large, stylized loop at the end.

Michael Garand
506 Wisconsin Rd.
New Lenox, IL 60451
(815) 463-1996