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Phillis Johnson-Ball

STB Finance Docket No. 35087
395 E. Street SW
Washington DC 20423-0001

To whom it may concern,

I have been a resident of Plainfield, Illinois, for over 6 years now. We moved to this area because of good schools and fairly priced homes. The area is in the top 12 of the fastest growing areas in the state of Illinois. One of the things that we struggle with in this area is the traffic congestion. They are putting up homes and businesses at a very fast pace around here but unfortunately the road improvements that are needed to accommodate such growth are lacking.

Not we are told about the CN acquisition of the EJ&E railway. This will increase our train traffic from an average of 16 trains per day to over 42 trains per day. I also read that the trains will now be up to 2 miles in length. We can not accommodate the vehicle traffic we have here now – I can only imagine how congested the area will get when vehicle traffic flow is paused for a 2-mile train to pass 42 times in an average day.

Our school district is the largest in the state outside of the city of Chicago public schools. The number of busses that have to pass over rail crossings daily to get our kids safely to school on time is large. This is a task that is hard enough given the number of schools and school-aged children we have in this district. How are our kids ever going to make it to school on time with this increased train traffic? Some of these kids already get up at 6:00 AM to get ready for school and catch the bus. It is not healthy for our kids to have them get up even earlier because bus routes will take longer as buses wait for 2-mile trains to pass 42 times per day.

The rail crossing by my subdivision does not have a crossing gate – just warning lights. That crossing sees only about 3 trains cross during daytime hours when parents are driving around with children and kids are out playing. I am concerned about the safety of that crossing when the train traffic more than doubles.

The people of the area of Plainfield do not want this acquisition. We strongly oppose it for the reasons I mention above. Additionally it will no doubt increase the time it takes for residents to get to and from work, will increase our air pollution, will increase noise pollution, and will cause damage to homes over time due to the increase in ground vibrations.

Mandy Ellermann

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mandy Ellermann', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.