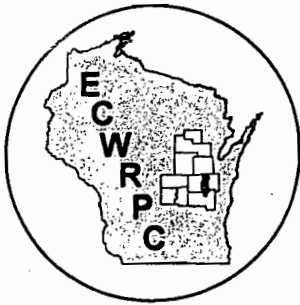


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EAST CENTRAL WISCONSIN REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

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*An Economic Development District and Metropolitan Planning Organization
 Serving the East Central Wisconsin Region for over 35 years
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December 17, 2008

The Honorable Anne K. Quinlan
 Acting Secretary
 Surface Transportation Board
 395 E Street, S.W.
 Washington, D.C. 20423-0001

Re: Finance Docket No. 35087

Honorable Anne K. Quinlan:

I am writing to urge the STB to approve the acquisition of the Elgin, Joliet and Eastern Railway as proposed by the Canadian National Railroad. While east central Wisconsin is well north of the EJ&E line the congested freight rail system through Chicago impacts our economy directly. As I understand it the proposed acquisition of the EJ&E would enhance freight and passenger rail movement through and around the Chicago area. Adding capacity in the Chicago area is expected to significantly improve the reliability of scheduled freight service for hundreds of communities that are currently impacted by delays.

The East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission is the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Appleton, Neenah, Oshkosh and Fond du Lac urbanized areas and long range freight planning is an important component of our transportation program. Rail congestion in the Chicago area has long been identified as a major issue and this action could significantly improve the movement of goods and services in the region and a large portion of the country.

As I research this issue it seems the CN is making a good-faith effort to mitigate impacts to communities adjacent to the route and are cooperating with other rail carriers and stakeholders in the Chicago area. While every community is important the STB decision should strongly consider the economic benefit of the entire country by improving the overall freight system.

Freight transport demand is forecast to increase fairly dramatically over the next 25 years and we need to utilize all of the capacity available and plan for future infrastructure including the necessary safety improvements to protect quality of life and accommodate economic growth. I urge the STB to consider the big picture and the investment that must be made to lead in a world economy.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Sincerely:

Walt Raith

Walt Raith, Assistant Director, MPO Director
 East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission