

15796

To Philip Johnson - Ball

Harriet Susman

I am enclosing a copy of
 an article that appeared in
 the September 17th *General*
 Sun. I could not have
 expressed the feelings of our
 community better. I think I
 would like to send my voice
 and thoughts. Taxpayers
 are paying higher property tax
 for real estate that is down
 in value and will be
 destroyed by the town.
 Taxpayers are going to pay to
 make in their income tax to
 pay for the hair cuts, and

Canadian National wants those
that payers to pay for the
improvements on the rail line
that will bring greater profits
and jobs and in some cases
not for the citizens that will
pay, or for the communities
in jeopardy, but for Canadian
Nat. Railway. No real respecting
answers will be put to
We hope you don't fall into
the group known to hurt
the people of this country
for their own future, in doubt
game. Please vote against
the CN acquisition of the
FIVE. Ref. STB Envelope
Number AB 35087
Thank you - Charles Deanna

Voice railway concerns

Just over one week remains for you to write to the Surface Transportation Board about the proposed 400 percent increase in train traffic in the Lincoln-Way area.

Sept. 30 is the last day that the STB will accept letters about the Draft Environmental Impact Statement concerning the proposed acquisition of the EJ&E railway by the Canadian National Railway. The proposal would increase the number of trains from six to 28 per day on the tracks that run east and west parallel to and between Laraway Road and U.S. 30. The proposal calls for more trains, longer trains, larger engines and 600 percent more hazardous materials than currently travel through our community.

The STB is the only government agency that will decide whether to approve the transaction, disapprove it or approve it with conditions. We believe that this three-person commission really wants to hear from you. Your opinion can have an impact on their decision.

You can view the draft EIS at www.stbfinance-docket35087.com. I hope that you find something to write about. We have provided a number of suggestions at our Frankforttrainstop.com Web site. If you have not found something to write about, consider this basic tax subsidy issue.

The draft EIS suggests that the STB will only require CN to pay 5 percent to 10 percent of the cost of overpasses and underpasses that are needed. They expect U.S. taxpayers to pick up the bill for the bulk of this cost. Why should U.S. taxpayers subsidize



Jim Holland

this exceptionally profitable foreign railroad that reported profits of more than \$2 billion dollars last year on revenues of \$8 billion? If the STB were to order the CN to pay for the overpasses and underpasses, the CN would likely find it cheaper to follow the suggestions of the CREATE organization that has made proposals to correct the rail congestion in Chicago, or they would find it cheaper to build a new railroad farther out in the country. Either program could completely solve the Chicago rail congestion problem for all railroads, not just this one foreign railroad.

The CN won't accept either program, because with the EJ&E purchase they believe that your taxes will pay for most of the required mitigation measures.

In addition, currently the draft EIS only projects traffic five years into the future, and that projected traffic does not justify any overpasses or underpasses in the Lincoln-Way area. Lincoln-Way communities routinely make road traffic projections 20 years or more into the future. Using the longer-term projections would justify overpasses or underpasses in the Lincoln-Way area and many more along the rest of the tracks. The overpasses and underpasses can be phased in as needed, but the key is

that the CN needs to pay for all of them, not we taxpayers.

It seems even more absurd for the taxpayers to help the CN when we consider one of their strategies. The CN recently built a new container port in Prince Rupert, British Columbia. This port is closer to China than ports in the United States. The CN hopes to run 200 car trains from this port, through the Lincoln-Way area to the CN intermodal terminal in Memphis. In effect, your tax subsidy for such items as overpasses and underpasses will help the CN take jobs away from U.S. citizens who work for West Coast ports and for U.S. railroads. In addition, your taxes will help subsidize the transportation of products made in China, making U.S. manufacturers less competitive.

The tax subsidy issue is one that all citizens can relate to and it can be corrected by having the STB order CN to pay for overpasses and underpasses instead of the taxpayer. We believe that if this is required, the CN will abandon the EJ&E acquisition and they will find more appropriate solutions to Chicago's rail congestion problem.

Between now and Sept. 30 you have a chance to speak up on this issue. Take a few minutes to write to the STB. Send your letter to:

Phillis Johnson-Ball
Surface Transportation Board
395 E St. SW
Washington, D.C. 20423
Ref: STB Finance Docket No. 35087

Jim Holland is the mayor of Frankfort.

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