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Docket #:

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Subject: * CN Aquisition of EJ&E Line
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Message:

It is my desire to reinforce the urgent need for members of the board to carefully and diligently review the community impact of the proposed acquisition of the EJ&E Line by Canadian National. As a homeowner in Plainfield, IL whose property is immediately adjacent to the rail line, I stand in the minority among locals as a vocal advocate of the acquisition, given certain stipulations. It is my feeling that suburban leaders, including those in Plainfield, have been short-sighted with regard to the possible benefits of a massive increase in freight traffic through suburban counties. Will County already has substantial warehouse and distribution centers and Plainfield's position near the intersection of interstates 55 and 80 is ideal for expansion of such distribution hubs given an influx of transported goods to the region. Having said that, Plainfield is a quickly growing community that is woefully at the mercy of passing rail traffic as the result of multiple grade crossings within the village limits. Our access, as commuters by the thousands, to interstate 55 is impeded by a grade crossing at IL-126. The current intermittent obstruction of this crossing is sufficient to cause gridlock that is unavoidable. Other crossings at 135th St. and 143rd St. are vital in allowing the passage of emergency vehicles throughout the community, including those from a new fire station currently under construction at 143rd St. As a community that is so reliant on the passability of grade crossings, both for ease of movement by it's residents, but more importantly for securing the safety of those residents, the increased obstruction of grade crossings in the village is of paramount concern. It is in addressing these concerns that I diverge from the leadership's position. The issue of regrading those crossings, while I understand estimates to do so are in the order of \$40 million, are not insurmountable. I know that members of the board will give careful consideration to the impact this acquisition would have on suburban communities, Plainfield included. I urge you to promote active and meaningful participation by Canadian National, the communities affected, and the federal government to equitably address the funding issues that exist with regard to the needed grade crossing enhancements. This acquisition is absolutely a win/win proposition for the communities along the railway, for Canadian National and for commerce in these beleaguered times...given the proper thought, planning and investment by the interested parties.

