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**RIVERSIDE PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT 96**

**63 WOODSIDE ROAD**

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September 29, 2008

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

Dear Ms. Johnson-Ball:

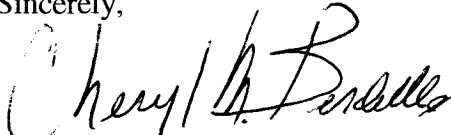
As the President of the Riverside School District 96 Board of Education and on behalf of all School Board members, I am writing to urge you to approve the Canadian National acquisition of the Elgin, Joliet & Eastern Railway.

Freight train congestion in our community impacts the day-to-day lives of our residents, students and employees. Employees are delayed getting to work and parents to pick up their children. While these may be inconveniences expected in a region which acts as a transportation hub, it is the safety of the students which is of utmost concern. Moreover, the School Board wants students in the classrooms and ready to learn, not waiting at a railroad crossing.

The freight congestion in our community jeopardizes the safety of our school children. Our homes and schools lie near the rail lines across which freight trains travel. In some cases, the tracks run between our schools and the students' residences. When freight trains idle at various points on the rail line, our children who walk to and from school, are tempted to crawl under or around stopped freight trains.

As you consider the final environmental impact of the CN acquisition of the EJ&E railroad, we urge you to include the impact on the safety of the children in the communities where the number of freight trains will decrease. We have lived with rail congestion for years and now want the relief that would result from the EJ&E transaction.

Sincerely,



Cheryl M. Berdelle  
School Board President  
Riverside School District 96