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PAUL & CHRISTINE DYTRYCH

21615 South 108th Avenue
Frankfort, IL. 60423

September 29, 2008

Ms. Phyllis Johnson-Ball
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20423

Re: STB Finance Docket No. 35087

Dear Ms. Johnson-Ball:

We are adamantly opposed to the proposed acquisition of E.J.& E. railroad properties by Canadian National. We vigorously recommend their petition be denied. Our reasons follow.

PUBLIC SAFETY

- The proposed 400% increase in train traffic (actual undoubtedly much higher with no prohibition for increase in the future) will create a serious, life threatening peril. Increased train lengths of up to 3 miles can, and will, block grade crossings in four suburbs simultaneously. Subjecting police, fire, ambulance and school bus traffic to excessive delays due to freight traffic is unconscionable.
- According to hospital emergency room officials, every extra minute of delay reduces a heart attack patient's chance of survival by 10%. ICF International, a transportation consulting firm, calculated the potential wait time at grade crossings would increase from 10 minutes a day (6 trains) to 5 hours and 45 minutes a day (28+ trains). This is unacceptable by any standard or measure.
- Any increased risk of hazardous material spillage is unacceptable. CN is an unsafe railroad according to Canadian government statistics. In a 2005 report, 54% of CN's locomotives, 50% of train brakes and 26% of CN maintained grade crossings were found to be defective. In May 2008, another report issued by the Canadian Parliament ranked CN lowest on implementing a safety management system designed to offset accidents and safety hazards.
- U.S. homeland security is jeopardized at a dangerous junction in history. Foreign originated containers trans-shipped through Canada that enter the U.S. via land routes are not subject to the same strict standards as those entering the U.S. through a domestic seaport.

ENVIRONMENTAL

- Excessive waiting at grade crossings will increase air pollution and waste scarce, expensive fuel reserves.
- Noise and vibration caused by increased traffic are not only annoying, but reduce property values for homeowners along the 198 mile right of way, thus exacerbating an already shocked and weakened real estate market.

ECONOMIC

- The President and CEO of CN, Harrison Hunter, was quoted in a *Chicago Tribune* article of 2/13/08 as offering \$40 million to upgrade grade crossings but stating that U.S. taxpayers should pay for the bulk of the improvements. If only 25% of the 133 grade crossings are improved, the cost would exceed \$1.3 billion. With the egregious cost of gasoline, a weakening economy, budget deficits at every level, government bailouts and all the challenges of trying to survive in a world underscored by rampant greed and self interest, local taxpayers **CANNOT AND SHOULD NOT** pay the bills for a enriching a foreign company.

Local taxpayers have nothing to gain and everything to lose. **THERE IS NO BENEFIT, ABSOLUTELY NONE, TO LOCAL TAXPAYERS.**

It is unbelievable that CN's petition is even being considered. Would a U.S. railroad get comparable treatment if they wanted to run their trains through suburban Toronto or Quebec? We think not.

At the end of the day, it would be more cost effective to pay the \$300 million price offered for E.J&E. to U.S. Steel and let the tracks remain fallow, **than to enrich a foreign corporation at the expense of U.S. Taxpayers.**

Sincerely,

Christine Dytrych *Paul Dytrych*