

* 02135. 010908. Keller. Bus unknown. O.N

January 9, 2008

To the Surface Transportation Board:

I live in the Barrington area but my residence is not in the close proximity to be affected by the train noise. I have been in commercial real estate for 28 years. I currently own a real estate brokerage office with 4 locations in the Chicagoland area; its headquarters is in downtown Barrington. I have 17 agents in that office, who commute to the office daily. We do commercial/industrial/investment brokerage. I worked maintenance for the Burlington Northern Railroad to pay for college. In the early 1980's, I was responsible for the appraisal of all the real estate for the Illinois Central Gulf Railroad. I testified before numerous Interstate Commerce Commission hearings as to the value of the real estate in abandonment cases. I have a soft place in my heart for railroads. I haven't come to my conclusions from an emotional perspective but a reasoned one coming from experience as a commercial real estate professional.

I am going to limit my comments to an area in which my company has expertise: Barrington retail properties. The proposed increased traffic on the EJ & E line would have devastating ramifications to the Barrington retail market. A strong retail base is a crucial and integral part of any community. Without a vibrant shopping district a community has a tired feel. Barrington's current administration is very proactive in its attempt to revive and strengthen its retail base, spending an enormous amount of time and money doing so. Much of their work is expected to bear fruit in 2008. Until now, it has been a struggle to maintain our present retail base. I am continually disappointed to see one of our retailers closing up shop. One of the biggest complaints current shoppers give for not coming to Barrington is the traffic congestion; I hear it frequently. Barrington isn't just the Village of Barrington. The neighboring Villages (North Barrington, Lake Barrington, South Barrington, Barrington Hills and others) all consider Barrington as their downtown. Barrington retail relies on the support of these and other outlying communities. The people in these other communities have other choices for their retail dollars. They do not wish to deal with the problems that would be associated with shopping here. It is imperative that our traffic congestion not get any worse. If you were to add one, two or more hours of additional traffic delays to the Barrington market, I KNOW that the effects would be disastrous. I believe many of the current retailers would not survive and attracting new businesses would be difficult at best. I am worried that the economic impact of what is being discussed today would be crippling to our retail community specifically and to our overall community in general.

Sincerely,

Kris Keller, CCIM
Principal

Surface Transportation Board
CN-EJ&E EIS - FD-35087
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