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SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

VIA FAX 202-245-0458

January 28, 2008

Charles Nottingham, Chairman
 Surface Transportation Board
 395 E. Street, S.W., Suite 1220
 Washington D.C. 20423-001

Dear Chairman Nottingham:

I would like to take this opportunity to express Southern Illinois University's serious concerns regarding the CN Railroads' petition to the Surface Transportation Board (Finance Docket #No. 35087, Canadian National Railway Company and Grand Trunk Corporation - Control - EJ & E West Company).

The petition, if approved without the adoption of Amtrak's proposed mediation plan, would result in stranding Amtrak and its users thereby effectively eliminating the Illini and Saluki routes, which are funded primarily by the State of Illinois and provide two daily round trips between Chicago and Carbondale.

Two years ago this university appealed to the Governor and state legislature and successfully won approval for additional state appropriations to create the Saluki route. Since then, ridership on the existing Illini and new Saluki routes have increased dramatically both among students and the business community.

Southern Illinois University supports Amtrak's recommendation on the new route known as the "Grand Crossing Route" which would be an alternative should the Air Line Route be eliminated. However, no such route elimination should be granted until such time as the Grand Crossing Route can be fully funded and is completed.

Annually, over 400,000 people use Amtrak into Union Station. Not providing access to Union Station would result in a serious economic set back for all of Illinois and would be of particular hardship to the thousands of students in the Carbondale area who rely upon this service daily.

Downstate communities such as Centralia who have 15,000 Amtrak passengers annually would be dealt an additional economic blow to its already struggling regional economy. This is a regional issue affecting all communities in proximity to Amtrak service points throughout the State of Illinois.

I therefore respectfully request that CN's position in this matter not be granted until such time as the acceptable heretofore mentioned alternative is in place.

Respectfully,

Glenn Poshard
 President

CN-EJ&E EIS - FD-35087

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Pc: US Senators Dick Durbin and Barack Obama; US Congressmen John Shimkus & Jerry Costello;
 Illinois State Senator John O' Jones; IL State Representative Kurt Granberg

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