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U.S. Surface Transportation Board
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I read a news article today where more opposition groups are proposing a new letter writing campaign regarding the acquisition of the EJ&E by the CN as being completely detrimental to the well being of their individual communities. I would like to just include my two cents worth as a supporter of the proposal.

The fact remains in this country that the supply of goods required to keep the Great Nation of America moving forward as this century progresses will require much more than what the highway transportation network can provide. Our existing highways are already overly crowded, plus fuel prices "must" be taken into consideration and there is no more efficient way to move many of our goods than the rail system. Absent the vast amount of capital that would be required to build new highways or additional capacity to the existing highway or rail infrastructure, we must make use of any under utilized assets we already possess.

The movement of freight through the Chicago hub, be it rail or highway experiences a significant bottleneck. Truck and automobile traffic at Interstate highways 294, 80 & 94 where they meet just outside Chicago at the southern tip of Lake Michigan is a mess despite recent expansion and will likely never catch up with demand. Rail traffic through Chicago is delayed because of the rail congestion presently experienced and the CN/EJ&E transaction will improve this significantly, while causing only a little inconvenience for the communities where this track lies.

Many of the residents have forced their local governments to join the fight to keep this transaction from completion and from my viewpoint is just because they want to keep their communities as they are. While each suffers from congestion of their own making as each has grown, they refuse to look at the other suburbs that have co-existed very well with the railroads. I live in Geneva, IL. about 4 blocks from the Union Pacific main line. Yes, we do have an overpass and an old underpass in this town, but the traffic that is impacted is minimal and the wait times for trains is also minimal.

Neither do we have ambulances full of dying people stacked up on one side of the tracks and the other side of town is not wildly burning out of control while the trains hold up the fire equipment. We have not built duplicate fire stations and hospitals on each side to the tracks to accommodate the deluge of emergency situations that just happen to occur when a train is going by and cannot wait for the extra three minutes that would be required in the most extreme cases.

It's funny, disaster will run rapid in these suburbs that will have their train traffic go from 6 to 25 trains per day when the suburbs of Geneva, West Chicago, Winfield, Glen Ellyn, Wheaton, Villa Park & Elmhurst peacefully exist with the Union Pacific where over a 100 trains per day run through their towns. Neither do they all have multiple over/under passes. Some have none at all, and yet traffic moves well. The idea that traffic will suddenly turn in to gridlock is an illogical statement. A train moving across a street will stop traffic for perhaps three minutes. In most situations, within several hundred yards of the train crossing there already exists a traffic light where the same auto traffic will sit for probably one to two minutes anyway, yet this is a reasonable situation. In addition the train tracks will only impede traffic 25 times per day, while the traffic signal will stop people 24 hours each day. Total sit time for the automobiles experiencing the added train traffic will be about 80 minutes, while the sit time for a stoplight will be 12 hours.

This entire issue seems to me to be a silly argument and one that is bent on either stopping the expansion of rail traffic because it might be inconvenient to the average citizen, but smells more of the "NIMBY" thinking or is designed to have the railroads write checks to the local governments who might even spend some of it to improve their traffic situation. I say might as I examine the situation below.

Barrington, IL. is one of the most vocal communities in opposition to the transaction. Yes, they do have a large amount of traffic congestion to deal with. Will it be made worse with this transaction? Marginally in my opinion. Growth of this community was fueled by the fact that the old C&NW (now UP) ran through town and became a great station for folks to travel by commuter train into Chicago for their daily work. Over time their community grew because of the desirability of folks that wanted to live there and the communities beyond Barrington also grew. A main highway, 14 and four lanes, runs through town (southeast/northwest) while Lake Cook Road runs (east/west). In the other direction highway 59 runs through town (north/south). All three of these roads converge within the small downtown area of Barrington and carry a great amount of commuter traffic, both to and beyond Barrington. Highway 59 has an exit at the northwest tollway so much traffic exists on this route. The strange thing is that Barrington Road also has an exit at the northwest tollway and this road converges with route 59 at the southern edge of Barrington. This is traffic going to work in the AM and home in the PM has to run through Barrington. Also the many commuter trains that carry people to work in Chicago also stops directly downtown where these roads all meet.

What great steps has Barrington taken to assist this traffic flow? Nothing more than to install more traffic lights (remember the sit times) in order to "try" to control their growing commuter traffic. They have not built over/underpasses nor have they re-routed traffic around the downtown area. Yet they want the CN railroad to either ignore taking steps to help alleviate their own traffic congestion in the greater City of Chicago or put up millions of dollars to solve Barrington's very own traffic issues, which they have ignored for many years.

The Chicago area already has freight train moratoriums during commuting hours so the CN/EJ&E transaction will not hinder the peak traffic times as no trains will run and the

small number of freight trains that run on this UP line running through Barrington should not be hindered by the addition of a few more CN trains.

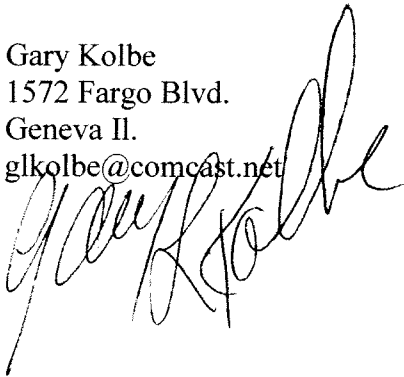
Multiple suburbs have railroads running a significant number of trains through them. You have only to look at what they have done to co-exist with the railroads and the issues can all be solved and have been. BNSF, CP, NS, CSXT and UP all have tracks that run through the suburbs of Chicago. Each of these railroads has more trains running than the CN does and yet traffic has not come to a stand-still as the many communities along the EJ&E seem to think will happen. At the end of the day, this country will continue to expand and the options for improving freight AND commuter traffic has to not only keep pace, but needs to be expanded beyond its present capabilities. This will never be done unless there is a signal sent that perhaps commerce/commuting begins to exert precedence or at least assume equal footing as the people's right to never change their world. It is just not practical to believe all our lives and our communities will remain the same, while the world around us is forced to change.

The politicians that are pushing to derail this transaction are doing so out of fear that their constituents will "not" vote them in again next year unless they are vocal in opposition. However there are also many of us who realize this is necessary to expand the transportation network or it will hinder us in travel as the highways become more & more crowded by trucks carrying commerce that the rails can do just as well and perhaps better.

I hope the STB realizes the CN/EJ&E acquisition is progress towards the greater good and is not allowed to be held up by a few citizens that wish to isolate "their" communities from the changing world.

Yours truly,

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gary Kolbe", is written over the typed name and address.