

September 12, 2008

Members of the Federal Surface Transportation Board,

Ref: STB Finance Docket No. 35087

I have lived all of my almost 70 years in Barrington, Illinois, and I spent the first 12 years of my life in a home that backs up to the EJ&E track. When I was a kid the occasional freight that rumbled past at night would wake me up, but in spite of that, I have always loved trains.

Over my lifespan I have observed that the EJ&E has changed very little, whereas other rail lines in the area (including the Union Pacific, which also runs through Barrington) have grown with the times – and affected communities such as Barrington have adapted as the years went by.

Communities can learn to “live with” gradual changes and increases in both rail and highway traffic, but if a radical change is made in a sleepy rail line that communities have grown up around, the sudden burden would be staggering. A person can work his or her way up to lifting a heavy barbell, but if the same weight is suddenly applied to an unconditioned person, that person cannot support the weight.

As a long-standing member of my local Plan Commission, I realize that you can't (and shouldn't) stop progress. The idea of a business seeking to improve its efficiency represents the American way, even if it is a Canadian company. But quality of life is also important to shaping the American way, and *businesses have the moral and civic obligation to make certain that any plans to improve their operations or efficiency do not have a negative impact on the safety and quality of life of their neighbors.* It is my sincere belief that the recent DEIS in this matter did not adequately identify the extent of the impact that the proposed acquisition would have on communities along the EJ&E.

The issues at the heart of the proposed acquisition include pedestrian and traffic safety concerns, emergency services response time, traffic congestion, noise and air pollution, hazardous material spills, property values, and the list goes on – have been much publicized and debated, and they don't need to be rehashed here. What does deserve repeated mention, however, is that *CN expects affected communities to foot the bill for most of the cost of mitigation of these problems – if it can be determined that there is suitable mitigation and relief available, and I'm not satisfied that the DEIS did that – when the proposed acquisition is for the efficiency and profit gain of a non-American company.* This is NOT the American way.

Thank you for your consideration.



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