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Phillis Johnson-Ball
Surface Transportation Board
395 E. Street, SW
Washington DC 20423
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Peter & Meghan Williams
21350 Carlton Street
Crest Hill, IL 60403

Unfortunately, freight trains are a noisy, smelly part of our everyday lives. My husband and I built our new home in the Cambridge Crest subdivision in Crest Hill, IL approximately three years ago. We were aware that the E J & E railroad tracks would run behind our home and were told by the builder, D.R Horton/Cambridge Homes, that "the trains go by maybe once or twice a day, if that". What we would find out after moving into our home is that we were sorely miss-led.

You can see the proximity of the trains to our home in the photo below. We were misled from our builder in the frequency of the trains. They also did not inform us that the trains would park behind our home. The E J & E freight trains run more like every couple hours. In addition to passing our home at all times of the day and night, we were not informed that these trains would park and be left running with their smelly exhaust, constant noisy engine and air brakes. These trains are parked daily, most of the time for several days at a time. Had we been informed of their true frequency and desire to park, we would not have purchased a home here.

The trains are noisy and the constant smell of diesel exhaust is enough to gag you. The crossing that that resides on the main road, just outside of our subdivision is hard enough to get across with the current train traffic. An increase in trains would also affect emergency vehicles trying to cross the tracks, such as ambulance and fire, getting to their emergency destination. If Canadian National were to purchase this railroad, this would be disastrous to our everyday lives. We would be even more affected than our current situation, if this deal were to be approved. It is devastating to even think about how our lives would be affected.

Even with the current train traffic, we cannot hear our television. When the trains go by, we have to pause our show until it passes. We are not able to enjoy a cool breeze on a spring or fall day, since we have to keep our windows closed. We have the additional expense of running the air conditioning on days where it is beautiful and cool outside. When the trains go by, our walls and floors shake causing our pictures on the walls and dishes in our cabinets to rattle. Our bed shakes at night. It is embarrassing to have company over to our home, as you cannot even hear each other over the noise of the trains going by. Not to mention having to keep friends and family indoors with the windows closed.

We are also concerned about the increased risk of exposure to hazardous materials should an accident occur resulting in a release of these materials...We are so close to the tracks, the train would probably end up in our kitchen, if there were an accident. My family's health and well being would be put at risk if this deal would go through. Additionally, we are highly concerned with decreased property values with the increase of train traffic behind our home.

Can you imagine having to live in your home without having the simple pleasures everyone takes for granted? Can you imagine living in your home, not being able to enjoy having your windows open on a spring day? Can you imagine not being able to watch a television program all the way through? Can you imagine being woken up several times during the night, every night of the week, every time a train passes by? Can you imagine children not being able to enjoy their own

back or front yard, because of the noise and pollution? Can you imagine what the increase in train traffic would do to us?

Recently, I attended a meeting at our village hall, where Canadian National pitched their proposal to village officials. Part of the plan included an unsightly concrete sound wall behind our home. This would not be all together the worse thing to happen if Canadian National took control over the tracks. The worst part is that it could take three years to build the wall. So, we would have to live with the increase of 42 trains a day with no wall.

We ask that you please take us into consideration when voting on allowing Canadian National to purchase the tracks behind our home. We are a typical middle class family, just trying to make a living and enjoy life. Please think of us when voting. Please save what little peace and quiet we might have left in our lives.

This photo is taken from our bedroom window.



Thank you for listening,
Peter & Meghan Williams