

Phillis Johnson-Ball
U.S. Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20423

January 21, 2008

Re: Acquisition of E.J.&E by Canadian National Railway - (Docket No. FD 35087)

Phillis Johnson-Ball,

I am writing to express my concern and opposition to the acquisition of the Elgin, Joliet & Eastern Railway Company (E.J.&E.) by the Canadian National Railroad (CN). The proposed expansion of freight traffic on the E.J.&E. rail line by CN is so egregious to the health, safety, environmental protection and quality of life of the people and businesses in Barrington and northern Illinois that it defies common sense, much less consideration for approval by the STB.

As a life-long resident, property owner and tax payer residing in the village of Barrington, I have a vested interest in the actions of any foreign owned company which by its stated intent must adversely affect my life in a community that has for 145 years worked to control growth and protect an ecologically sensitive environment. CN's stated intentions to increase rail traffic through the western corridor by 5 fold is a devastating blow that puts all our personal and public investments in community, safety and environmental protection at risk. Such an increase in traffic over a rail line that is already crisscrossed up to 400 times each day by school buses filled with children in the Barrington area alone should be considered a negating factor of the utmost importance.

To paraphrase Hunter Harrison, CEO of CN, "...acquisition (of the E.J.&E.) saves us a day in transportation time...and only scratches the surface of what the potential might be here down the line." Mr. Harrison's words make the CN Company intentions clear, the results of which can only lead to untenable problems with rail safety and arterial road traffic in an area already suffering from congestion.

Increased traffic and environmental problems have already been noted in letters to Secretary Vernon Williams from State Senators William Peterson, Melissa Bean and Pamela Althoff, among others, which state "...it is likely that CN will grant track usage rights to other railroads, thereby causing additional train traffic." Consequently, the ability to lease E.J.& E. right of way to a third party must be viewed as a negative when taking into consideration any assurances CN might provide regarding traffic congestion and safety issues in their application for STB approval. In the village of Barrington, an increase in rail traffic of this magnitude threatens our parks, schools and children who frequent them on a daily basis.

The Village of Barrington will undoubtedly suffer severe consequences due to its location on major east/west (Lake Cook) and north/south (Rt. 59) and north/west (Rt. 14) roads as well as the Northwest Metra Commuter Rail line. All of these major arteries will be crossed by the increased CN freight traffic on the E.J.&E 20 to 30 times each day. The addition of high volume CN rail traffic to the mix will virtually "kill" the village of Barrington. The downtown as we know it will cease to

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exist as retail and service businesses must certainly flee from an area afflicted with perpetual noise, inferior air quality and impossible traffic congestion.

It has already been noted that a single CN train, estimated on average to be close to two miles in length, is long enough to block all three major road crossings in an around the village core and stop traffic flow in the Barrington area in all directions at the same time. If CN operates their estimated 20 or more trains through Barrington each day, the result will be more than a minor inconvenience, as CN has already labeled it. It will be potentially catastrophic and result in hours of unnecessary delays and restricted access to emergency services by Police, Fire and Medical for thousands of people ... services which if delayed by even minutes could mean the difference between life and death.

Barrington alone has nine major crossings of the E.J.&E. line. Add to that the 133 public highway-rail grade crossings throughout northern Illinois on the E.J.&E line and you have a recipe for disaster as commuters and residents suffer the consequences of economic loss and increased unsafe driving conditions.

CN's record of poor performance with regard to safety and environmental issues is well documented by the Canadian Rail Regulatory Board, by the Ontario town of Parry Sound, and by the U.S. National Transportation Safety Board. Certainly CN's actions must be given close scrutiny above and beyond their corporate word where ever Safety is concerned. I trust each instance of slow response and non-compliance noted will be given serious review by the STB as it considers the potential impact of increased rail traffic through our villages.

CN's early attempt to preempt a request by the Village of Barrington and Congresswomen Melissa Bean for an Environmental Impact Study is a prophetic sign of their arrogance and disregard for our community, our businesses, our environment and the STB regulatory process. Opposition to CN approval is not an example of a "not in my backyard" knee-jerk reaction to change. Rather, it's a valid concern over the serious detrimental effects CN rail traffic must impose on Barrington residents and all communities along the E.J.&E. line.

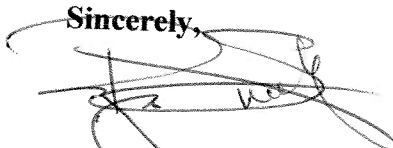
Common sense should tell us all that simply moving rail traffic from the established lake front lines to the more populous and continually growing western suburb areas does not reduce congestion. Such illogical strategic planning must in fact, result in just the opposite effect, as a second rail line permits further congestion and environmental damage to opened up to big business interests.

It must be recognized that the environmental and safety consequences of increased traffic congestion, gridlock, wasted fuel consumption, and air quality in areas as yet unaffected by CN rail traffic represent just the tip of the "iceberg". If left unchecked, this increase in rail traffic on the E.J.&E. alone will result in irreparable loss to a host of new communities. The sheer volume of freight traffic proposed by CN will effectively tear apart the village of Barrington and destroy a way of life that has drawn people to the area for over 145 years.

I respectfully submit that no possible benefits to CN approval can exist that are not heavily outweighed by losses to business, property values and personal life styles. I further submit that of far greater importance to our communities is the need for improved mass transit in northern Illinois. The fact that the E.J.&E. line has already been identified by Metra as a low cost, low impact solution to this future need should be given top priority over any CN proposal stressing freight and private company profit over the needs of the people of northern Illinois.

I trust everyone connected with the STB regulatory process will weigh their decision carefully, taking into full consideration the impact their actions will have on our lives, our communities, our economy and our environment today and tomorrow. Please do not sacrifice all we have worked to build and maintain on the "alter" of big business special interests. Please deny approval of E.J.& E. line use for freight purposes.

Sincerely,



Roger L. Smith
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Copies: Secretary Vernon Williams, U.S. STB, Washington, D.C.
R. Bruce Dold, Editorial - "The Chicago Tribune"
Jim Baumann, Managing Editor - "Daily Herald"
Dan McCaleb, Senior Managing Editor - "NW Herald"
Paul Sassone, Senior Editor - "Pioneer Press"