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HANS AND CLAUDIA SCHMIDT

Ms. Victoria Rutson
Chief, Section of Environmental Analysis
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20423-0001

July 31, 2008

RE: Docket # 35087, CN Purchase of the EJ&E

Dear Ms. Rutson:

Most of us moved to the western suburbs to avoid the industrialization and congestion of the city. Now, Canadian National Railway wants to increase its bottom line by using EJ&E tracks to move its trains through our communities. This will prove to be more than annoying, it will be dangerous:

Chemical Week, February 19, 2003: A CN train carrying formaldehyde, hydrochloric acid, methanol, and vinyl chloride derailed on February 9 at Tamaroa, Illinois, prompting the evacuation of approximately 1,000 people.

Planet Ark, March 9, 2008: The federal government has laid three charges against Canadian National Railway over a 2005 spill into a lake near Edmonton, Alberta, and for not telling officials that hazardous chemicals spilled into the popular lake.

The new District 204 Metea Valley High School property abuts the EJ&E tracks, as do the back yards of many subdivisions. What happens if a spill occurs? Most streets crossing the tracks will be blocked by the train and impassable, hindering the movement of emergency vehicles.

Naperville Sun, May 18, 2008: "We have looked at the route, have looked at each and every crossing, and we don't see any crossing that would require any grade separation," said Jim Foote, executive vice president of CN.

Chicago Tribune, April 22, 2008: "Maybe some of the citizens of the western suburbs will have to learn to deal with change," said CN president and CEO E. Hunter Harrison.

Those smug, arrogant responses to legitimate issues demonstrates the total lack of concern on the part of CN officials over the certain deterioration in quality-of-life for tens of thousands (hundreds of thousands?) affected residents. Over 30+ years this area developed in a way to give people a peaceful western suburb of Chicago to live within

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the best school district in the entire nation. The cities developed nicely and balanced not anticipating that a one lane EJ&E rail will turn into a monster, that 50+ freight trains will pound through our communities and will pull everything that comes in their way into a dark abyss. Soon the communities along the tracks will be a desert of foreclosure, abandoned and neglected homes thanks to CN profits. Apparently dangerous spills, traffic congestion, noise, pollution, and curtailed movement of emergency vehicles doesn't mean much compared to CN profits. If the railroad is not capable of scheduling the movement of its trains over existing routes, perhaps the federal government should assume that responsibility as it does with airplanes at congested airports.

As a resident of a community that will be greatly harmed by the number of freight trains that would operate through the region if Canadian National Railway (CN) is allowed to purchase the EJ&E rail line, I urge you to do everything in your power to ensure that the interests of the residents of our region are protected against the negative impacts of this acquisition.

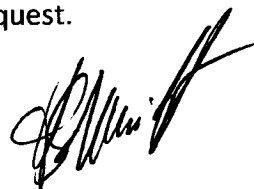
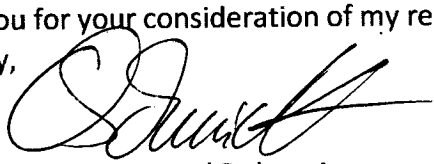
The Draft Environmental Impact Study (DEIS) on this transaction was released on July 25. This document let the region know what we will expect in the way of public protection from your agency. It was frustrating to read the article in the Chicago Tribune. My community will be facing significant issues related to public safety, environment, traffic gridlock, emergency response times, and economic losses if this acquisition is approved. None of these issues are being adequately dealt with by the CN, which is why I am very concerned and ask you to fully address these issues in the EIS.

Additionally, please ensure the following two issues are fully and adequately addressed:

- CN's unwillingness to provide freight traffic projections beyond three years (a cut off that precedes the Phase 2 expansion of the major new port served by CN – the Port of Prince Rupert in western Canada). CN needs to provide capacity data and operational projections to 2020, at the very least. If the American Association of Railroads can demand taxpayer investments in rail infrastructure to accommodate a projected growth in rail freight of 88% by 2035, it is inconceivable that the CN cannot quantify its own long range business projections involving the EJ&E.
- Due to the significance of the potential impacts to our communities and region, we must ask for a longer review period than 45 days to respond to the DEIS. Communities need 120 days for due diligences review that can adequately examine the data used to arrive at the conclusions and to respond to the study's findings.

Thank you for your consideration of my request.

Sincerely,



CC: Illinois Congressional Delegation