

September 29, 2008

Surface Transportation Board Members:

This is a response to the EJ&E acquisition. I think this acquisition will be a devastating blow to Frankfort that will have a very, very negative impact on our community. I am a wife and mother of four. We currently live along the EJ & E Railroad in Frankfort. In fact, it backs up to our home. I am very concerned for the health and safety of my family. I am not the type to make waves but I felt I could not sit back and watch this situation unfold without commenting on it or appealing to any of you parents that currently have the task of deciding on the outcome of this problem.

I am not sure if any of you are familiar with Frankfort but almost the entire community backs up to this railroad. In fact, there are only two ways out of my subdivision. One is Laraway Avenue which passes directly by my daughter's school. On a good day, this street is very congested with stop signs and backups for miles. The other way is to cross the tracks. With almost a constant projected train coming through, I do not know how we will ever attend any school function or any important event on time again. I know this sounds like an exaggeration. However, crossing the tracks is the only way to get to major thoroughfares in Frankfort, Mokena, and New Lenox.

Our fire department and police departments are centrally located on the opposite side of the tracks to our home location and the location of my children's schools. If there is an emergency, emergency vehicles will be prohibited by the train. Also, you do need to cross the tracks to get to a hospital. As our closest hospital is 30 minutes away.

Not only will vehicles not be able to get through, property values are already being negatively impacted. Houses are put up for sale all along the tracks on anticipation of the merger. We cannot even move because none of the houses are selling. Nobody wants to move by the tracks now.

As it is every morning around 4:30 we get an incredible train whistle blowing in our bedroom because we do not have a gate crossing by our subdivision. We just have the flashing lights. How will it be when there are constant trains running through? It is just incredible that this acquisition is being considered at all. We are a suburb with nothing but families who are just trying to raise our children in a quiet safe community. I really believe that with the purchase of the EJ&E not only will we be giving up our right to raise our family in a quiet environment but no consideration is being made for our safety. If there is some kind of environmental accident, it will take place right in our backyard. As I stated, we have no safety gate by our children's school and we will have no recourse if something horrible happens. I believe this merger is all about dollars and cents and has not one good benefit for the families of Frankfort, Mokena, Naperville, Park Forest, New Lenox, Joliet and so on and so forth. Please take into consideration the people that have to live with this problem. Please think of the people first. Thank you.

Sincerely, a very concerned citizen, wife and mother,

Paula Jaber

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Paula Jaber".

21946 Emily Lane  
Frankfort IL 60423