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Paul Nicol
11882 Brooke Ct.
Frankfort, IL 60423

August 18, 2008

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

Re: STB Finance Docket No. 35087

Dear Phillis,

I would like to bring to your attention my concerns over the current proposal by the Canadian National Railway to buy the EJ&E Railway here in the Chicago area. I am a resident of Frankfort and our community and the local area close to my neighborhood would be drastically impacted by this proposal should the CN be allowed to purchase the EJ&E.

As a resident, there are a few major concerns that I have.

1. *Safety.* Frankfort has only one crossing where the tracks go over the road. All other crossings are at grade and I see the potential for safety problems from the pedestrian and biker standpoint. A popular biking/walking trail called the Old Plank Trail is located just about a ½ mile north of the EJ&E tracks. This trail runs for several miles in each direction and connects many communities. Many folks that use this trail system get to it by crossing the EJ&E tracks. And many of these individuals are children. **It is very likely that if rail traffic increases on the EJ&E tracks there would be a death or serious injury because of a child trying to cross the tracks and being hit by a train.**
2. *Noise and property values.* Frankfort, like nearly all of the communities that would be affected by this proposal, has hundreds (if not thousands) of homes within a half-mile of the EJ&E tracks. We built our home within the last year and are within several hundred yards of the tracks. The 5-6 trains that use the tracks currently are not much of an issue for my family. However, 20+ trains per day and some that will be two miles long, concerns me as a homeowner because my family will have to hear these trains on a continual basis instead of every few hours as we do now. My property value as well as hundreds of other homes in our community would go down because of this increase in rail traffic and noise.
3. *Traffic congestion/Emergency services.* Our community is a growing one. Frankfort is steadily growing and in 20 years the population here is projected to be over 50,000. While traffic today is not an issue for our community, it will be a severe problem in the future if this proposal goes through. Because of the number of at grade crossings, our community would basically be shut down every hour

because of the increase in the number of trains and the length of the trains. The slow speed of the trains (currently the trains on average are not going more than 10-20 mph) would close crossings for as long as 15-20 minutes per train. From an emergency services standpoint, I have a real problem with this. The closest major hospital is north of Frankfort and north of the EJ&E tracks. This means that approx. half of the homes in our community would be basically cut off from access to this hospital each time a train would come through. Fire and police services would also be adversely affected by this proposal and response time would be very slow.

I hope that you will consider all of these concerns. The recent EIS, in my opinion, did not accurately take into consideration these and many other concerns.

The simple answer to all of this is to reject the proposal set forth by the CN to purchase the EJ&E. I do not see a scenario where the above concerns would be addressed properly by the CN, and any potential mitigation would not do enough to overcome the problems that would be caused by the increase in rail traffic.

Please ask the individuals reviewing this proposal to contact me. I would like to share these and several other concerns with them. They are also welcome to come to my house to see in person the affect this proposal will have on my family and my neighbors.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Nicol", with a stylized, flowing script.

Paul Nicol

PHONE: 815-464-4852