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September 23, 2008

Ms. Phillis Johnson-Ball
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20423-0001

STB Finance Docket No. 35087
Canadian National Railway Company and Grand Funk Corporation ("CN")
Application for Approval to Acquire EJ&E West Company

Dear Ms. Johnson-Ball:

As a resident and elected Trustee of the Village of Riverside, Illinois, I strongly urge the Surface Transportation Board to approve CN's acquisition of EJ&E Railway.

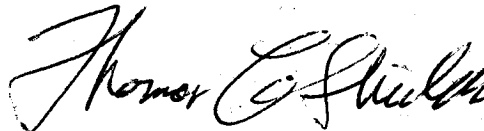
We have two major rail lines that pass through Riverside, Illinois. One of those lines is used by CN for freight transportation. If this transaction is consummated, we will lose between 8 and 10 trains each day. While this is not a huge number, it is an important relief since we experience 150 to 160 trains each day over these two rail lines. More importantly, the trains we will lose are freight trains which tend to be the most disruptive and contribute to the greatest extent to the rail congestion in our area.

The rerouting of 8 to 10 freight trains will significantly relieve the congestion of freight and rail traffic in our area and make the use of that capacity more efficient. The increase in train traffic in the western suburbs of Chicago, in my mind, is not significant. In fact, it should be viewed as a decrease in the overall train traffic in the greater Chicagoland area.

We believe that this transaction will reduce the number of rail accidents and reduce the number of highway/rail at grade crossings.

Enclosed is a copy of the testimony delivered by my fellow elected Trustee in the Village of Riverside, Ms. Candi Grace. I support her comments and adopt them as my own and urge you to approve the transaction.

Very truly yours,



Thomas C. Shields
Trustee, Village of Riverside

Enclosure

- Good Evening
- My name is Candi Grace and I am a Trustee in the Village of Riverside
- I feel very strongly about the issue in front of us tonight “should the CN Railroad be allowed to purchase the EJ&E in order to move freight traffic through our region more efficiently?”
- I am disappointed that no public hearings were scheduled near communities which will benefit from this acquisition
- In making this important decision, I would hope that the STB would look at the bigger picture for northeastern Illinois and northwest Indiana, not just at what the municipalities along the EJ& E are saying.
- Mayor Melchert of Bartlett has been quoted as saying: ‘ We have to find a new approach to traffic congestion’ in reference to the STAR line project. The purchase of the EJ&E is a part of the answer to that traffic congestion in my village and those around us.
- Mayor Melchert is correct; we do need to find new approaches to address traffic congestion and the railroads are a solution to meeting the nation’s growing freight mobility needs. Railroads can haul a larger volume of goods than trucks while using less fuel. The land needed to haul freight on a railroad versus a road is much less and improvements to rail are often much cheaper than expanding or building new roadways.
- We have capacity challenges and transportation congestion in this region that needs to be improved. The country’s economy depends on it as much as our region’s does. The goal of this project is to make freight move much more efficiently through our

region and to reduce freight congestion in areas that have been impacted for decades.

- The draft EIS also talks slightly about the benefits to communities that carry the burden of freight traffic today.
- I wish the environmental impact statement would have looked a little more closely at those benefits.
- Riverside has 2 train lines, with 150-160 trains/day. If this deal goes through we'll lose 8-10, not a huge %, but an important number.
- The trains we lose will no longer block access to Loyola University Medical center, a Level 1 trauma for our area.
- North Riverside, a suburb just north of my village, will be able to respond to all of their fire call outs instead of depending on neighboring communities because their access is blocked by the train.
- I would also ask you to consider the pollution created by cars waiting at blocked intersections in the more densely populated inner ring suburbs.
- We know this will not eliminate all freight traffic through our community, and we are not looking to move our problem to someplace else for someone else to deal with.
- And if I thought that the status quo was best for the region, I would not be speaking here tonight
- However, the status quo is not best for the region - There is an existing rail line that is not being fully utilized. CN is not building a new rail line and putting trains where there have not been any before.

- The draft EIS even states that the EJ&E line has been in operation since 1891 and predated surrounding development.
- All projections and reports published over the last decade from USDOT, AASHTO (American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials) and the GAO have all discussed the growing demand for freight and the lack of capacity in our country to handle it.
- Here is an opportunity to improve freight movement and improve our connection to the global economy and to provide congestion relief for heavily populated and congested areas.
- As stated in the draft EIS states land use becomes increasingly dense as the rail lines approach Chicago. These are the communities looking for a little relief, communities such as Riverside.
- I also wish that when discussing this issue we would use raw numbers and say an increase of 20 trains a day instead of saying quadruple increase the number of trains OR say a decrease of 8 trains a day instead of a 5% decrease. It's misleading because of the HUGE disparity in base numbers
- Another number that should not be lost is the safety number. As the opposition talks about safety and how they will now be at risk and their quality of life will be forever changed – the EIS states that there will be a 77% decline in rail accidents inside the arc and that overall, highway/rail at-grade crossings would decrease by 8%. That 8% is a decrease for **everyone**. The safety of the people on the EJ&E is no more important than the safety of the people in the entire region.

- I would ask you once again to please consider the entire region and the benefits gained as you continue to discuss this transaction.
- Thank you again for allowing me to comment tonight. I am hopeful that the Board will approve this transaction for the greater good.