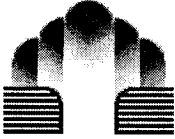


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Brian O'Boyle/STB
08/29/2008 02:14 PM

To Vicki Rutson/STB@STB, Phillis Johnson-Ball/STB@STB
cc Rudy Saint Louis/STB@STB
bcc
Subject Fw: STB Finance Docket 35087-public comment

----- Forwarded by Brian O'Boyle/STB on 08/29/2008 02:12 PM -----



Mary Anne Block
<MABlock@Ameritech.net>
08/28/2008 03:23 PM

To Congressional.Public.Services@stb.dot.gov
cc
Subject STB Finance Docket 35087-public comment

Dear Ms. Phillis Johnson-Ball

I am utterly shocked and appalled at Canadian National Railroad's criminal disregard for human life in CN/EJ&E acquisition. The studies have clearly shown that this significant increase in freight traffic through the heart of Barrington will not only cripple the businesses of Barrington and the surrounding communities, pose safety hazards and cause plummeting home values in an already failing economy, it will cost peoples lives! How can STB ignore the fact that people's lives are at stake when the freight traffic completely gridlocks the town with the mile plus long trains crossing at least 3 major intersections at the same time! Emergency vehicles have absolutely no opportunity to reach 90% of the community. CN's position that the delay would amount to "no more than a stoplight" is ludicrous. One Metra train one one hundreth the size of the CN container trains alone at one intersection can cause a ten minute delay in driving through the town of Barrington. The delay posed by just one additional freight train through several intersections (not to mention the 25-50 additional trains estimated per day) would be astronomical! How can the STB in good conscience believe that such a delay by ambulance and fire vehicles could not result in lost lives!

If this transaction truly would benefit the Chicago area, then STB should be looking into if and how the CN will address these hazards **as a condition** to approving the merger. It is clearly the responsibility of CN (and not the communities significantly inconvenienced by the freight traffic) to come up with and bear the cost of a plan to **prevent** the traffic congestion and resulting hazards and loss of life as a condition of approving this merger. Even if it means building rail separations to divert the freight traffic away from the roadways, it is CN's responsibility to first find a ways to do so that is feasible (especially given the short distance between the rail crossing on Route 14 and the crossing at Hough Street/Barrington Road). If such plan is feasible, it is CN's responsibility to bear the full cost of these separations. This is the cost of doing business and cost they must weigh in with the "significant profits" they expect to achieve by diverting the freight traffic away from the city of Chicago and through the peaceful established communities. STB's position that the communities are "benefitting" from the rail separations is absolutely ridiculous given that the communities like Barrington have clearly demonstrated their opposition to this merger in the first place. Why would these communities choose to deal with the inconvenience of reconstructing roadways, increased traffic and other hazards just to build these separations if we could avoid the problem altogether with the defeat of this acquisition and increased use of the EJ&E railroad?

Do you really believe the Chicago area as a region would "benefit" from this acquisition given CN's intentions to significantly grow freight traffic through **any** rail line that might have capacity-ultimately even in the city of Chicago? Even where CN can demonstrate decreased freight traffic in other communities, the decrease isn't really significant enough to impact the safety or environmental hazards of those communities either positively or negatively because the existing CN rail lines do not run through neighborhoods or impact an entire community such as the EJ&E line does in Barrington. Thus, the only "benefit" to this transaction is increased corporate profits for CN. Can it ever be justified to put entire communities at such risk when the only real "benefit" is increased corporate profits?

Even if you feel it is appropriate to cause disruption and inconvenience to this peaceful and established community so the freight traffic can be diverted from the more congested areas of Chicago, please consider the significant risks of loss of life imposed by this acquisition. CN has the obligation to pursue every effort to execute this transaction without causing safety hazards, environmental risks to this community and certainly without costing people's lives. Haven't car manufactures been forced to pay billions of dollars in damages for knowingly causing people's lives because the cost/benefit analysis justified these "damages" with increased profits? The law does not tolerate balancing people's lives against corporate profits and companies have had to pay dearly for attempting to do so. How can the STB ignore this travesty of justice! Please consider what really matters when reviewing this transaction-human lives!

Sincerely,

Mary Anne Block
749 Oak Road
Barrington, Illinois 60010