

9/28/08

Phillis Johnson-Ball
 Surface Transportation Board
 395 E St. SW
 Washington, D.C. 20423

Dear Ms. Johnson-Ball,

I would like to express my displeasure as to how the Gov't is handling the acquisition of the EJ&E Railroad system by Canadian National. This acquisition has the potential to seriously change the quality of life we have today in Frankfort and then a much greater potential of our taxes increasing to accommodate the construction of overpasses and/or underpasses to accommodate the traffic issues that this acquisition will surely create.

According to a Chicago Tribune article titled, "Monster trains coming down the tracks?" the Federal Gov't does not have any restrictions on how long a train can be. The trains coming thru Frankfort could be as long as 2 miles long which is considerably longer than the ½ mile long trains we see now. In addition those trains will also be traveling faster and would be double decked (with two cars stacked on top of one another) while also carrying a significant increase in toxic material. The traffic in our town will increase from 6 to 28 trains a day (more than a 400% increase).

We have a total of six 'Grade Level' crossings that would be affected by this increase. The problems range from getting our kids to and from school on time to getting emergency vehicles thru to their destination in a timely manner. Keep in mind that if there are 28 trains coming thru everyday then all the Emergency vehicles will always be forced to take the longer route around the tracks using Route 45 instead of taking the shortest route. They won't be able to gamble on the probability of a train - as there will be too great of an opportunity for lawsuits if they gamble and lose. Frankfort does not have a major medical facility close by and additional delays getting to the medical facilities will create additional problems for those with life threatening conditions.

Also, the trains will be carrying additional toxic materials. The Surface Transportation Board's study said that number of railroad accidents will increase by 28% with the increase in traffic. That is a major concern to safety and well being to our community.

The Surface Transportation Board made recommendations that the Railroad only be held responsible for only 5 to 10% of all the infrastructure upgrades (i.e., construction of overpasses and/or underpasses) and that Gov't should be responsible for the rest. The "Gov't" means the people of Frankfort with only little (if any) help from the IL Dept of Transportation (IDOT). IDOT Has said they can't burden the responsibilities of those costs so the real burden falls on Frankfort to make those changes which will be a significant expense building around their existing train traffic. CN is a Canadian firm that (according to Jim Holland's letter) posted a profit of over \$2 Billion last year. Why should the responsibility fall to the local Gov't and not Canadian national?

Everyone agrees that with the increased traffic there will be a reduction in property value for homes within 250 feet of the RR tracks if this proposal goes thru. The reality is that the property values will go down for everyone in this community and it has the very real potential to reduce the potential for additional Tax revenue to come into Frankfort from new business development. This means there would be an added potential for higher taxes for us. How many businesses want to invest in an area where there is congestion and potential safety issues?

In summary, all this adds up to a significant Increase in congestion and noise and potentially taxes and a Decrease in safety, property values and the quality of life we have enjoyed in Frankfort. I am not saying that CN should not be allowed to buy the EJ&E. However, I am saying that they should not be allowed to do so with the lack of guidelines in place today and that should be held accountable to the appropriate investments that would need to be made to the communities that they will be traveling thru.

We appreciate your help in making this a fair and equitable arrangement for everyone involved.

Sincerely,

Stephen J. & Joyce L. McGarry
 314 Sherlock St
 Frankfort, IL 60423

