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**CITY OF CHICAGO**  
**MICHAEL R. ZALEWSKI**  
**23RD WARD ALDERMAN**

September 11, 2008

Phillis Johnson-Ball  
Surface Transportation Board  
395 E Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20423  
Ref: STB Finance Docket No. 35087

Dear Ms. Johnson-Ball:

I urge the Surface Transportation Board to approve the Canadian National Railway acquisition of the Elgin, Joliet and Eastern Railway (EJ&E) and to consider the positive impact of the transition on the freight congestion in the region and the traffic delays caused by the existing Canadian National freight traffic.

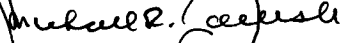
The 23<sup>rd</sup> Ward is bounded on all sides by railroad lines, from the Belt Railroad on the south to the Canadian Pacific on the west, my constituents deal with the noise and crossing delays caused by freight trains on a daily basis. The freight congestion delays trains entering nearby rail yards which consequently delays motorists and pedestrians who must wait while the trains wait for clearance to enter the yards.

The effects of freight congestion go far beyond the 23<sup>rd</sup> Ward. Freight congestion threatens the future of Chicago as the rail hub of the U.S. The bottleneck created by freight congestion in the city of Chicago delays trains for sometimes as long as 24 hours. That adds to a business' cost of delivering their products. If the freight congestion continues to worsen, businesses will seek less congested routes by which to ship their products. The result will be railroads circumventing Chicago and using other Midwestern cities as their hubs. We cannot take a chance on that happening.

Finally, on behalf of my constituents who have to wait at grade crossings for trains to pass, any relief is welcome. Whether it be one or ten fewer trains a day, the residents of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Ward would welcome the relief from unexpected traffic delays which cause them to be late for work and for picking up kids from school or turn a quick trip to the grocery store into an hour long excursion.

For all these reasons, I believe that the STB must approve the CN acquisition of the Elgin, Joliet & Eastern Railway. It is right for the 23<sup>rd</sup> Ward, Chicago and our nation's transportation systems.

Sincerely, ‘

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael R. Zalewski". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "M".

Michael Zalewski

Alderman

City of Chicago

23<sup>rd</sup> Ward