

September 28, 2008

Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20423

Dear Sir or Madam:

I am writing this letter to convey my deepest concerns about the proposed purchase of the Elgin, Joliet, & Eastern Railway by the Canadian National Railway.

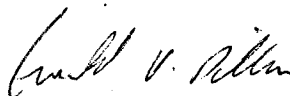
As a 6-year resident of Will County, which would be greatly impacted by this acquisition, I can bring an outsider's perspective of the amount of existing rail traffic that criss-crosses both my local community along with the great Chicagoland metropolitan area. When my family and I first moved to the area from Missouri we were shocked at the amount of rail traffic that existed and the number of "at grade" crossings. The area into which we have moved is even more of a concern as it is "old farmland" that has been developed into nothing but housing during the housing boom in the last decade (while this has slowed it has not stopped and the number of units built is quite staggering). The roads that intersect rail on this old farmland did not historically require the safeties that are now required in a surging residential area. In fact, many still do not have railroad cross gates- simply signals. And subdivisions, and actual houses, some of which have fences and some of which do not, butt right up to the rails.

There has been much discussion of the safety impact and there is great debate on this topic. But let's also add to the discussion that all of the information coming from CNR is "best case"- as it relates to safety, traffic delays, etc. The other day I was commuting to work, a mere (these days!) twelve miles from my house, and it took me well longer than normal due to a train. To get through a local town on my way to work there are many parallel paths that all have at-grade crossings. As I continually turned around and back tracked to another path I only found that it was also blocked (a couple of these grade crossings exist right next to schools). The issue is that the train was both long and stopped- I don't know why it was stopped, maybe someone was stupid enough to stop on the tracks of a crossing during a traffic backup at a light (sadly this is constantly on the news in this area and observed during nearly every daily commute). But the fact was the train was stopped. I spent 15 minutes trying to find a path through the town, the whole time which the train was stopped.

So I have heard the estimates about lost productivity, fuel/energy, safety, etc. But again, we don't live in an "ideal world". We live in the real world. And when given the real world gut check all of this information just doesn't make sense.

I would ask that the Surface Transportation Board not look at the pure "economics" of the transaction, which are easily quantified on a ledger sheet. I would ask that the STB also consider the real world consequences, soft costs, and most importantly the people, families, and citizens, that would be impacted by this transaction. Without significant concessions by CNR to upgrade existing at-grade crossings, approved by a commission that includes local residents, this acquisition should not be allowed to happen. Thank you for your consideration and time.

Sincerely,



Gerald V. Dillon