



BIG CITY ACCESS
SMALL TOWN CHARM

Anthony T. Calderone
MAYOR

517 DESPLAINES AVENUE
FOREST PARK, ILLINOIS 60130
708-366-2323
FAX 708-771-0177
www.forestpark.net

Rory E. Hoskins
COMMISSIONER
ACCOUNTS & FINANCE

Michael R. Curry
COMMISSIONER
PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY

Mark S. Hosty
COMMISSIONER
STREETS & PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS

Martin L. Tellalian
COMMISSIONER
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Vanessa Moritz
VILLAGE CLERK

September 29, 2008

Phillis Johnson-Ball
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20423

Dear Ms. Johnson-Ball:

I am writing to urge the Surface Transportation Board to approve the Canadian National Acquisition of the Elgin, Joliet & Eastern Railway.

Freight trains impose a heavy burden on the residents, businesses and visitors in our community. Everyday we deal with the delays, noise and pollution that result from the freight trains passing through and idling in our community. Allowing CN to move their trains to the EJ&E would disperse the concentration of freight trains coming through Chicago and nearby suburbs and, as a result, diminish the environmental burden that we bear.

In addition, opponents claim that increased freight traffic will compromise their safety by delaying emergency vehicles and personnel. If the Surface transportation Board assessed the positive impact on communities that will see a decrease in freight trains, most of which have higher population density, they would inevitably reach the same conclusions that we have – that fewer lives will be jeopardized if the trains move to the EJ&E.

Finally, in this uncertain economy, the Chicago region cannot afford to lose its position as a transportation hub. As high fuel costs push more freight onto the U.S. rail system, railroads and their customers will not tolerate the bottleneck created by freight congestion in Chicago. They will shift their trains to rail lines passing through other Midwestern towns. Chicago cannot afford the loss of this industry and its jobs.

We have lived with rail congestion for years and now want the relief that would result from the EJ&E transaction. On behalf of my constituents, I urge you to approve the CN acquisition of the EJ&E.

Very truly,


Michael R. Curry
Commissioner

ATC/sac