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September 29, 2008

Phillis Johnson-Ball

STB Finance Docket No. 35087

395 E. Street SW

Washington, DC 20423-0001

To whom it may concern:

This note in response to a letter that was sent to Plainfield residents by House Republican Leader, Tom Cross, regarding the CN acquisition of the EJ&E Railroad which runs through Plainfield, Illinois.

I have spent my entire life (40 years) living in Plainfield. As you are aware, Plainfield, Illinois is a rapidly growing suburb of Chicago. Our once sleepy small town of roughly 5,800 residents has grown into a town of 25,000+ residents. The traffic level in our town has increased exponentially. We have a number of trains that run through town at various times of the day but by far the morning and evening gridlock it produces causes the most havoc on our town.

I work for Indian Trail Middle School which is located on Eastern Avenue between Lockport Street and Illinois Route 126. There are five railroad crossings within a short distance of one another. Several days each week our students either by bus or by car and faculty members are late for school as the train can sit for as long as 15 minutes or more on the tracks. These trains at times have hundreds of cars on them and easily block all five intersections in our downtown area. The increase in traffic that would be caused by the EJ & E acquisition would even further impact our school and community. It would cause more delays in getting our students to school in a timely manner, hinder our parents from getting their students from school for appointments/dismissal, and keep emergency vehicles or equipment from reaching our schools in an emergency situation.

Route 126 is an exit off of Illinois highway 55, a major artery into our town. When the train sits on the tracks, this road can be backed up for miles coming into town. Route 59, the main North/South road through our town, is impacted by the cars that cannot turn down the side streets further impeding traffic. It is hard to avoid the train traffic because so many roads intersect the train tracks. I have seen commuters acting rudely and recklessly out of their frustration.

In closing, I do feel it would be a detriment to our community to allow this acquisition to take place. We don't have the ability to build above grade crossing to alleviate the problems these trains cause. To ask the residents to deal with more trains, delays, and frustrations is asking too much of us. I humbly ask you to vote against the acquisition.

Thank you for reading this note and taking our comments and feedback into consideration.

Sincerely,



Linda Bernhagen

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