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September 7, 2008

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

Re: STB Finance Docket No. 35087

Dear Ms. Johnson-Ball:

This letter is a letter of no support for the acquisition of the EJ&E Railway by the Canadian National Railway. I reside in home where the railway is less than 2 blocks from my doorstep. My husband and I bought this lot and built our home 11 years ago. We built our home fully informed of the railroad tracks with this proximity to our home. At this time, several freight trains pass on the rail, however their presence is spread out over the week, with never more than 2 in a day. Since the rails are close to our home, it is at times inconvenient or a nuisance to hear them, but it soon passes, and another does not pass for several hours. Additionally, one passes very late at night when most of us are asleep, and there isn't any traffic on the streets that the rails cross. So you see, although the rails exist, due to the low volume of traffic we have been able to "co-habitate" very well. It is a completely different scenario when someone moves into an area that is already "occupied" with a busy rail system, a refinery, construction, an airport, etc. In my opinion, you have no right to complain if you move to the problem.

If the Canadian company is successful in purchasing the railway, and the rail traffic increases as it has been advertised, the quality of life in the my town, and surrounding towns in Will County will be very negatively impacted. Increased rail traffic for us means: noise pollution at all hours, air quality degradation at all times, increased risk of chemical/hazardous waste spills to our mostly residential community (and environment in general), constant shaking of the ground when the trains pass, which affects our foundations, private water wells, and other structures, increased danger to the children in the area, decrease in wildlife due to almost constant noise and motion. These are the obvious problems that I can foresee, and don't even address the problems I haven't considered. We still don't know what affect this will have on our property taxes. Right now, our taxes are pretty steep, but our property value is good. What will happen in the future if the railway traffic is increased, our property value will decrease, and as you know, our taxes will not be decreased. My family and my quality of life should not be diminished due to the greediness of any company, let alone a company of foreign ownership.

Proponents of this project have touted that this is progress. Progress generally means that something good, eventful, or to the benefit of people occurs. In this scenario the only progress that is made is the money the Canadian National Railway will be making on the deal.... And no one can tell me they are not making any money on it-- they would not pursue it if it was not financially beneficial. This is not progress.

I have some questions/concerns that I would like responses to. They are as follows:

What improvements would the rail system undergo as part of the plan?

Realistically, how many trains will be passing through the Will County route?

Please tell me all of the types of cargo that will be transported on the rail system?

Is the Canadian Railway company in compliance with all applicable laws of the Canadian government, and also in relation to this purchase?

Is the Canadian National Railway company willing to pay for the damages and degradation when it occurs to our homes and community?

In closing, please consider the points that I have made. You are probably a home owner, or you at least know how difficult life can be. We all go to work everyday, raise our kids, contribute to our community as much as we can, go to church, and get up the next day and do it all over again. It is difficult enough, let alone have something like this that will certainly degrade the quality of life for many, many people in a very uncertain economic time.

Sincerely,

Susan Olenek

Susan Olenek
Homeowner, New Lenox Illinois
Will County

