

September 26, 2008

Phillis Johnson-Ball
Surface transportation Board
395 E St SW
Washington DC 20423

Ref: STB Finance Docket No. 35087

Dear Members of the STB:

I am writing to you to voice my strong opposition to the proposed sale of the EJ&E railroad to Canadian National. I am a resident of Mokena IL, one of dozens of communities in the Chicago metropolitan area through which the EJ&E tracks pass. These communities are home to over one million people, so the decision by the STB will adversely affect many people.

Historically, the EJ&E has been a small railroad; currently the railroad runs only 4-6 trains daily. Therefore, communities have grown up near the tracks and many homes, schools, businesses, and recreation areas are located very close to those tracks. The trains have been a minor inconvenience. However, Canadian National will immediately increase the number of trains run daily to 28 (and perhaps more in the future). And those trains will be longer and heavier -- therefore slower. The adverse effects on the residents of these communities will increase by a factor of 8 or 10.

Noise and Air Pollution. It is obvious that there will be a major increase in both noise and air pollution and, therefore, a significant decrease in the quality of life for the residents of the affected communities.

Traffic congestion. Most EJ&E railroad crossings are at ground level. The large number of CN trains will effectively close many roads in the area for several hours each day. Travel in many parts of the affected communities will be difficult, at best.

Safety. The immediate quadrupling (again, perhaps more in the future) of train traffic obviously significantly increases the chances of collisions and derailments. We anticipate an increase in hazardous material transport, with all the dangers that poses. The blocking of roads will also hamper or prevent emergency responders from reaching victims of accidents or health problems.

Infrastructure. As noted, most of the road crossings of these tracks are at ground level. Eventually these will have to be replaced by overpasses if this area is not to be strangled by traffic congestion. Canadian National has shown no interest in funding any portion of these anticipated billion dollar plus costs. If this sale is approved, future infrastructure changes will become the responsibility of the local communities. This sale will put

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American taxpayers in the position of subsidizing a foreign, profit-making company. The sale needs to be disapproved for that reason alone.

I have heard two arguments from those not opposing the sale.

First, the STB is not legally required to consider the impact of the sale on affected communities. However, in recent years, we have seen various major construction projects cancelled or significantly changed because environmental studies showed adverse impact on minor species of animals or plants. In view of this, it seems incredible that the STB would not consider the impact on the lives of a million American citizens. I urge you to strongly consider the environmental impact of this sale.

Second, I have heard the comment that 'the tracks were here first.' This implies that people living in communities near the tracks have no valid concerns about rail traffic. But, as I noted before, people moved into these areas because rail traffic was light and was not an issue. Increasing rail traffic as proposed is the equivalent of suddenly targeting a residential street and widening it to create a highway. The STB needs to consider what the situation is today. Allowing this volume of rail traffic in a heavily populated area that simply does not have the infrastructure (overpasses, noise dampening berms, etc.) to support it is simply not a good idea. I urge the STB to consider the terrible affects this sale would have on affected communities and reject this sale.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Viktoras A. Kuraitis".

Viktoras A. Kuraitis
11889 Golden Gate Drive
Mokena IL 60448-2027