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September 29, 2008

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

Ref: STB Finance Docket No. 35087

Dear Ms. Phillis Johnson-Ball:

First off let me tell you that I am dead set against the purchase of the EJ&E line by the Canadian National Railroad. My wife and four kids have lived in our current house for over three years. Our property of four acres is adjacent to the tracks and sits less than 200 feet from the EJ&E. My decision to buy a house for over a million dollars to move to this location was made after living slightly farther away from the tracks (approx. 1000 feet away) for over 10 years. I knew when moving closer to the train that the frequency of trains would not be an issue for me. I typically would hear only 3-5 trains per week when I was home. Lately, despite the fact that CN has supposedly not been using the EJ&E, there has been a significant increase in train traffic, and obviously noise. I can't imagine being able to live in my house with the proposed increase which is estimated to be 6.7 hours per day of trains running by my house! According to the report this is nearly a 10X increase in trains when accounting for train length and frequency.

The STB analysis fails in many ways to address the DEVISTATING effect to the Barrington area. Specifically below are analysis shortcomings from my brief review of the documents:

- a. The analysis indicates that there is an overall benefit to the Chicagoland area and beyond. How does the report quantify what the cost is to the Barrington area? The Barrington area

- almost exclusively has the greatest burden with this proposal. Why should I for one be placed in economic jeopardy by losing several hundred thousand dollars in home value for the benefit of the CN Railroad?
- b. Using either of the STB analysis freight train lengths of either 6829 feet and 6321 feet, what is the effect when the CN purported 12,000 foot trains come rolling in? What will prevent CN from operating these trains?
 - c. The section regarding effect of the trains on property value was inflammatory in my opinion. To indicate that the effect on homes less than 250 feet from the train tracks having an increase of 20 additional trains would INCREASE property value 3.81% as shown on Table 4.6-3 is ludicrous. Even if the report meant to say decrease 3.81% it is questionable. The author "extrapolated" to determine this. Some things should not be extrapolated. A more specific analysis should be done in the Barrington area, using data that would accurately reflect large freight trains not the commuter rail lines referenced.
 - d. To have noise eliminated the report indicates that have a good system design to eliminate noise, inspect rail car wheels,..... should not have to be said to be a requirement to CN. I can attest that living on a significant curve of the track that their train squeal is ever-present and extremely unnerving. Why haven't they done anything to date to improve this? Fact is they don't have any desire to spend money if they are not required to do so.

The "Applicant's Voluntary Mitigation" letter is lacking any substantive measures of mitigation affecting the Barrington area or myself. First off their plan would be to implement any mitigation the later of three years or the completion of the capital improvements described in their operating plan. Having to wait three or more years is incomprehensible for my family or me. We can't wait three years to get a good night sleep. Secondly when the economic costs are so personally devastating to have the CN railroad indicate that they would pay only 40 million dollars for mitigation is an insult especially since they have indicated that they have already spent an amount half of this to get this deal approved.

Phillis Johnson-Ball

August 27, 2008

Page 3

I can elaborate further about access to hospitals, traffic delays, and many other items. I don't believe the US has ever had a situation that would be so incomprehensibly detrimental to so many. It will take unprecedented action to deny this applicant but is the only logical and fair outcome. In summary this proposal should be DENIED as unacceptable.

Respectively Submitted,

David, Katie, Jack, Jim, Michael and Patrick Deroche