

September 23, 2008

Docket number 35087

Members of the Surface Transportation Board:

With the understanding that railroad congestion is a problem, I do not believe moving it from one area to another is a solution.

The City of West Chicago already has a problem with train congestion with the routing of Metra and Union Pacific Railways, blocking traffic for long periods of time.

With the increase of trains traveling on the EJ&E rails, automobiles, trucks and buses would idle longer in the residential areas, causing residents in this area more exposure to fumes, which could lead to health problems. A recent study has shown exposure to diesel fumes cause lung diseases.

The STAR line would most likely not proceed as in certain areas another rail would need to be added and in West Chicago there is not room for another rail. The Metra route would help alleviate traffic congestion providing a much needed north and south public transportation.

A large population of school-age children live west of the EJ&E tracks and cross these to go to their respective tracks I feel that some youths would try to beat the trains at the grade-level crossings. The potential exists for fatal consequences. School buses frequently have to cross the tracks. Having to reroute or wait for trains adds another expense to school districts.

Response time for emergency vehicles would be curtailed and the loss of these vital moments could cost someone a life.

The extra rail traffic cuts one part of the community off from many services and public facilities such as park district and library programs. The majority of the persons living west of the EJ&E tracks are Hispanic, Putting a minority groups in an isolated area.

Many of the homes along this route are about 25 feet from the tracks. The extra noise from the

train whistles and train traffic would have a negative effect on most living in the community. The majority of homes are not on sprawling one or more acre lots, but most are the average city-sized lots.

The tracks run near recreational areas such as parks and forest preserves and the extra traffic of trains could cause ecological problems.

The mitigation of safeguards have not been firmly stated and I do not feel it is fair for communities and counties to pick up the costs for the benefit of a private company.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Merle L. Burleigh". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name and address.

Merle L. Burleigh
366 Arbor Avenue
West Chicago, IL 60185