

Sept 2, 2008

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

Ref : STB Finance Docket # 35087
Ms. Johnson Ball

15176

On August 20th, 2008, I attended a rally in Frankfort, IL to get as much information as possible regarding the CN acquisition of the EJ&E Railroad. I live within a block of the tracks at 116th Ave, just north of a new school that I was asked to pay more taxes for. The reason I paid the extra tax was to insure a good quality district, even though I won't be using the school. I moved to Frankfort 6 years ago from the southeast side of the Chicago area. We had trains there, where CN is now. There are many overpasses and many of the homes are 60 or more years old. Many of these people moved in when the trains were running as much as they are today. So they accepted it as a standard of being able to buy an inexpensive property.

That's not the case with Frankfort and the other outer communities. It is just another way Chicago and Cook County try and push their problems on others. I worked very hard over the last 20 years to be able to afford this area. Everything I have is in my house. If this goes through, people will leave all along the line. 400% increase in train traffic is unacceptable. If CN is saying now that they will increase traffic from 6 trains a day to 40, you know there will be more. Once that happens, there will be no one to stop them, Who would you complain to and why would they help you. It's already done.

In this state, nothing can get done. We have Democratic governor, legislators, senators congressman and still they can't agree on anything. Enough is enough.

Here are some of the things that CN will cause if they get their hands on this railroad.

Negative effects on Quality of Life:

- Property values will decrease (do you live next to a train track)
- Emergency vehicles will experience delays (what if it is your parent or child)
- School safety (one block away, would you let your child cross a track that would get 40 + trains a day)
- Train accidents (law of averages says one will happen, the tracks are too close to many homes)
- Hazardous materials(right now its almost all coal cars going to the mills in Indiana)
- More pollution from diesel engines idling (would you want to smell that every day 40+ times)

CN Economic benefits they want you to think :

- 80 towns will get train relief, when in fact other trains will fill in the void and everyone will get more trains
- There is no evidence that any jobs will be created. Trains just pass through and no railyards are being built
- Increase in interstate commerce only puts profit in CN and there is nothing for the local communities
- CN wants local government to pay for improvements costing millions of dollars that no one has. We will not raise our taxes to build overpasses when education funding in Illinois is so bad
- If CN takes this line, there will be no Star Line which is intended to bring people from the low income south suburbs to higher paying jobs in the west and north suburbs
- They say more trains means less trucks. How could you possibly figure that out? It's just talk with no basis of fact
- CN thinks this just affects the areas in question. IF this goes through, everyone is effected in higher taxes to pay for improvements that CN is unwilling to part with their profits.
- There are many more unsubstantiated issues that CN paints a rosy picture of. None of their employees or management lives in this area. Just ask the people at CN you are dealing with and ask them where they live.

Thank you for taking the time to hear our pleas to take a slow and informed position to review all facts and talk to the people most effected. Don't be pressured for a quick decision by CN. When they don't get the profits they want , they will back off.

Sincerely,

Susan Boston

news

Stop the trains

Citizens can help prevent the proposed 400 percent increase in train traffic in the Lincoln-Way area by expressing their concerns directly to the Surface Transportation Board.

The Canadian National Railway (CN) proposes to purchase the EJ&E Railway and increase the number of trains from six to 28 per day on the tracks that go east and west through the Lincoln-Way area south of Route 30. The extra trains will be longer than current trains, and they will carry 600 percent more hazardous materials than current trains carry.

Significant increases in train traffic mean significant delays for emergency vehicles, business vehicles, school busses, commuters, and all the rest of us who travel north or south. It means there will be more accidents at crossings. It means there will be more chance for releases of hazardous materials



MAYOR JIM HOLLAND

It means there will be more noise and vibration near the tracks.

The Surface Transportation Board (STB) is the only governmental agency that will decide whether to approve the transaction, disapprove it or approve it with conditions. The STB will consider an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) before making the final decision on this issue. The STB is asking citizens to comment on the Draft EIS before it is finalized.

The Draft EIS is over 3,000

pages. There is an executive summary available at www.stbfinancedocket35087.com. In case you want to comment, but do not want to read all 3,000 pages or even the executive summary, here are some issues that are discussed in the Draft EIS along with some of my opinions about those issues. I hope that you will review the report yourself or pick a few of these issues and send a letter to the STB with your opinions.

■ Environmental Impact Studies are required to "take a hard look" at how a proposal will effect the environment. After examining the report, I do not believe that this EIS took a hard look at a number of issues.

■ The CREATE organization has proposed solutions to Chicago's rail congestion problem by improving the current tracks through the city. Others have suggested the advantages of new tracks outside the commuting distance to Chicago. These suggestions would benefit all railroads, not just the CN. The Draft EIS seems to dismiss the CREATE suggestions. If CN had

underpasses that will eventually be required, they would find the cost of the CREATE suggestions or of an entirely new rail line through rural areas would be less. The final EIS should seriously consider alternatives. The final EIS should order CN to pay for overpasses and underpasses.

■ For some reason the Draft EIS states that bicycle and pedestrian safety will be reviewed after the final EIS is published. Many bicycle trails and sidewalks already cross the tracks. The EIS needs to take a hard look at bicycle and pedestrian safety and the EIS should order the CN to provide proper crossings for bicycles and pedestrians where local plans show them.

■ Appendix L of the Draft EIS suggests that there will be a significant sound impact to residents near the tracks. The Final EIS should make it clear that the CN needs to pay for four way gates and other improvements necessary to qualify the entire Lincoln-Way area for a long term Federal Railroad Administration approved quiet zone to silence the train whistles except in an

should direct CN to pay the cost for sound walls, berms or extra landscaping to help mitigate sound near residential areas.

■ The Draft EIS states that property values within 250 feet of the tracks will be reduced, but the report does not estimate the value of those losses. The final EIS should state individual financial impacts. The STB should require the CN to pay for those losses.

■ This EIS needs to take a hard look at potential mitigation measures such as restrictions on the time of day for freight train operations to avoid conflicts with rush hour traffic or school buss traffic. The draft EIS makes no such suggestion.

Citizens who are interested in this issue are encouraged to express their concerns in writing to Phillis Johnson-Ball, Surface Transportation Board, 395 E Street, SW Washington, DC 20423, Ref: STB Finance Docket No. 5087.

Editor's Note: Frankfort Mayor Jim Holland occasionally will be writing columns for the NeighborhoodStar



The Regional Answer to Canadian National

TRAC: the Regional Answer to Canadian National

Responses to Myths perpetrated by Canadian National on the takeover of the EJ&E

MYTH #1: 80 municipalities will get freight congestion relief	FACT: At a Nov. 9, 2007 meeting of local Mayors in Franklin Park, CN spokesman Jim Kvederas was forced to admit any decreases for those communities would likely be temporary. According to CREATE, rail freight traffic in Chicago will double over the next 20 years. Other railroads will quickly fill any vacancy created by CN's departure. Yet CN continues to perpetuate the myth of so-called "winner" communities and a mythical "regional benefit" from fewer trains, as deceiving communities is critical to garnering local support for this transaction.
MYTH #2: There is "regional benefit" to this transaction	FACT: No jobs will be created as Chicago will simply be a "pass through" for CN freight. Communities that have been led to believe they will see far fewer freight trains will only see a temporary benefit as other railroads will rush to fill the void created by CN train departures. This is called "bait & switch".
MYTH #3: This is critical to fostering international and interstate commerce	FACT: To get products to market 3 days faster than their American rail competitors, Canadian National will knowingly harm communities ill-suited to handle 20, 30, 40 + two-mile long freight trains per day and expect to pay little for doing so.
MYTH #4: CN is "working with" communities on mitigation options	FACT: CN is meeting with communities – not working with them. Meaningful mitigation to reduce threats to public safety, congestion and environmental impact are requested by communities and dismissed by Canadian National. CN CEO Hunter Harrison was quoted in the Chicago Tribune as stating he expects federal and state taxpayers to pay for mitigation. He also has hired a Washington, DC lobbying firm (Foley & Lardner) to seek out federal taxpayer dollars to pay for any grade crossing mitigation that <i>might</i> be forced on it by the STB. CN Vice President Jim Foote stated at a May 16 meeting of the Naperville Chamber of Commerce that CN expects to spend \$40 million on fences, quiet zone infrastructure and first responder equipment and training. Of 133 grade crossings along the 198 mile line, he stated NONE of them warranted grade separations (underpasses or overpasses). None.
MYTH #5: Communities with increased trains will experience 2 -3 additional minutes of traffic delay per hour – about the same as a long traffic light	FACT: Unsupported and false assertion. ICF International, a transportation consulting firm calculated that <i>one community will experience 5 hours, 45 minutes delay per day – up from only 10 minutes.</i> Gates down times are NOT the same as delay times as gridlock from one train can take several traffic cycles to clear.

MYTH #6: No additional trains will be added to the rails.	FACT: Rail traffic will double in Chicago the next 20 years. The growth of container traffic capacity from the Port of Prince Rupert in Canada is expected to grow from 500,000 to more than 2 million containers by 2012 when Phase 2 of that Port is operational. CN serves as the sole freight rail line from Prince Rupert to all of North America. There is no prohibition against CN adding trains to this line once this transaction is approved by the STB – no prohibitions.
MYTH #7: Metra and the proposed Star Line are not adversely impacted	FACT: CN will have neither a legal obligation nor a commercial incentive to cooperate with Metra after the takeover. Coordinating its freight movement with 10 Metra intersections will delay commuters regularly. As stated in the July 10 edition of <i>U.S. Federal News</i> , Metra told Members of Congress that it has still received no assurances from CN about accommodating new and expanded Metra operations even as CN claims it has negotiated in good faith with Metra officials.
MYTH #8: CN is a safe railroad	FACT: CN remains under fire in Canada. In 2005, its government found 54% of locomotives, 50% of train brakes, and 26% of crossings defective. A 2007 report by the Canadian Parliament found a “disconnect on safety issues between management and front-line workers.” That report also highlighted what company employees call “a culture of fear” when it comes to reporting safety-related problems.
MYTH #9: More trains (less trucks) are good for the environment	FACT: Unsubstantiated. Massive vehicle gridlock at many of the 133 grade crossings waiting for 20, 30, 40+ 2-mile trains per day to pass will negatively impact air quality in the Chicago area. Overall air quality, and the impact of a single spill on Chicago’s shallow aquifer system and groundwater or conservation areas will not be part of the STB review. CN failed to act aggressively to confine a devastating \$130 million spill in Wabamun, Canada – preferring to focus on fixing its tracks.
MYTH #10: This transaction will achieve some of the goals of CREATE in managing Chicago’s regional freight congestion	FACT: The congressionally authorized and funded CREATE project has stalled for lack of <i>full</i> funding but remains the region’s planned freight congestion solution. CN will now establish a competitive rail corridor and any federal funds it secures for mitigation along the EJ&E will rob resources that could have advanced CREATE.
MYTH #11: A few resisting NIMBY locals should be overridden for regional and national interests	FACT: The takeover will have impacts beyond the justified concerns of locals. U.S. ports will lose business and jobs as CN lures Intermodal shipping traffic to Canada, and, container security may be degraded.

Written Comments Should be Addressed By September 30 To:

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Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20423
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**Visit www.frankforttrainstop.com or
www.fightrailcongestion.com for additional information**