

Phillis Johnson-Ball
 STB Finance Docket No. 35087
 Surface Transportation Board

September 28th, 2008

Dear Ms. Ball:

I understand that on September 27th at the hearing on HR6707 nearly 60 percent of Members of the House voting sent a message clarifying the STB's authority to deny an acquisition based on community impact, and I expect the STB to take that into consideration as the review process continues. You cannot deny the seriousness of the numerous safety, environmental, and economic impacts of this transaction on its surrounding communities. I do not disagree that commerce and competition are important but when the means to that end impact the safety and well-being of American citizens any value is lost.

CN's proposal will bring up to 25 more freight trains per day through several small and mid-sized communities that do not have the infrastructure – nor the funds to pay for such mitigation – to support this increase in traffic. This proposal, if allowed, will separate people from their emergency services, children from their schools, increase pollution, gridlock major thoroughfares, and will seriously impact the local economy by sending many local businesses elsewhere and causing major decreases to property values in an already failing economy. To not consider these issues would be a major injustice by our own government. If we cannot count on our own governmental agencies to protect us, who can we count on?

The mitigation options are negligible at best, but even so, the costs to implement them are staggering and there is no money available to implement them. The options would require major overhauls of heavily trafficked roads causing its own set of problems. This is not something that could take place overnight – this would take years to implement and millions, if not billions, of dollars in the end. Even if State and/or Federal aid was an option, why should the American taxpayers pay for a transaction for which the only real winner is a private company – a foreign owned company at that?

With regards to claims that there are 'winner' communities in this deal what happens in a few years when CN moves into Phase II of their plan – adding up to 100 more trains? Will those communities still be 'winners' or will CN move right back into those communities? They are in this to make money, not to make friends or to care about the impacts to our Country and the American people.

If you allow this transaction to pass, a precedent will be set and the railroads will continue to have the ability to secure increased profit margins at the expense of the communities in which they operate – and ultimately – all Americans. I don't deny that this is a difficult decision and there are many sides to this deal – but the side you are obligated to represent is the well-being of your fellow-Americans.

Best Regards,

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