

Other Submissions

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Docket #: -35087 - -

Subject: * CN Acquisition of EJ&E Railway
First Name: * Carol
Middle Name:
Last Name: * Rolfs
Address: * 631 Leon Drive

City: * Tower Lakes
State: * IL
Zip Code: * 60010-
Email Address: * rolfs631@hotmail.com
Group/Affiliation:
Message: STB Finance Docket 35087
January 11, 2008

My name is Carol Rolfs, and my family has lived in the Barrington area for more than 22 years. As evidenced by the attendance at the STB open house on January 9, 2008, our entire community is concerned about the impact of additional freight rail traffic as a result of the proposed purchase of the EJ&E line by CN. The Barrington area already faces traffic gridlock from the few freight trains and many commuter trains that cross our roads on a daily basis. All road crossings in the area are grade level which causes huge delays during the rush hours when many commuter trains cross the road, not to mention the safety issue. Adding lengthy delays to allow freight crossings will compound our road congestion.

In addition to the congestion these freight trains will cause, the safety of our residents is at stake. The EJ&E track crosses all the major roads in Barrington, Lake Cook Rd., Hwy. 59 and U.S. Rt. 14, within the length of one freight train. The passing of one train could block emergency vehicles from responding in a timely manner.

In addition to the congestion that the proposed increase in rail freight will cause, my primary concern is for the safety of our school children. District 220 school buses cross EJ&E tracks more than 400 times each school day. The bus depot is located just one block west of the track crossing on Lake Cook Road. The majority of schools and residents are located east of this crossing. If a bus gets delayed at a crossing that means there will be children waiting at a bus stop for an extra ten to fifteen minutes. Many of our bus stops are along busy roads, and most neighborhoods have no sidewalks. In addition, the bus routes begin at 6:15 a.m. for the high school, and in the winter it is completely dark at that time. Most of our buses are scheduled to run three routes each morning between 6:15 and 9:00 a.m. If a bus is stopped by freight train traffic twice during its routes on a given day, it will be almost thirty minutes late by the time it picks up elementary students. This will be a very dangerous situation having

Surface Transportation Board

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young children waiting so long on a busy roadside. In addition to jeopardizing the safety of our children, the additional bus transportation time will result in increased costs for our already financially strapped school district.

While the community realizes the potential benefits of increasing the use of this line for freight traffic, we should have some sort of assistance in dealing with the congestion and safety issues which will result. Obviously, CN expects to realize financial gains or the company would not consider purchasing the line. CN profits should not come at the expense of a small community. There must be some compromise and compensation for the hardship we may incur. Can over/under passes be constructed so auto traffic is not affected by the rail freight traffic? Can the freight trains only be allowed to cross Barrington during off peak and night time hours? Do not allow CN to build an additional track along this line which would compound this problem even further.

Carol Rolfs