

Village of



290 Evergreen Drive • Vernon Hills, IL 60061-2999 • 847-357-8700

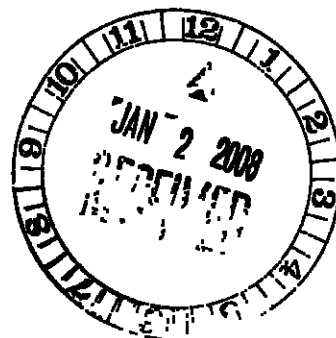
December 18, 2007

The Honorable Vernon A. Williams, Secretary
Surface Transportation Board
Office of the Secretary
395 E. Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20423-0001

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FD-35087

RE Canadian National Railroad Acquisition of the Elgin, Joliet & Eastern Railroad

Dear Secretary Williams,

The Village of Vernon Hills would like to take this opportunity to express our support of the Canadian National acquisition of the Elgin, Joliet & Eastern Railroad. While the Village is favorable to this acquisition, we request that the Surface Transportation Board consider a number of factors in their analysis of this acquisition regarding safety, as well as the quality of life in northeast Illinois. This proposed acquisition has a significant effect on the Village of Vernon Hills

One of the major benefits that we perceive in this acquisition by Canadian National is providing windows of opportunity for additional Metra Commuter trains to address commuter peak rush hour periods, as well as opening the possibility for the North Central line commencing weekend service. In consideration of this, we would offer the following

- It has been indicated to us that some of the limitations on increased rush hour service and the precise scheduling of trains concerns the operations of the Canadian National. The substantial decrease of trains south of Leighton, which is near the Village of Vernon Hills, from 194 trains to 2 trains per day should provide the opportunity for considerable expansion of Metra's ability to vary times and run more trains enabling shorter commute times.
- The North Central Service at this point in time does not have weekend commuter service on the Canadian National. Again because of the shift of freight trains at Leighton from the Canadian National onto the IJ&E, there should be a considerable increase in capacity for commuter trains during weekends. This would provide communities the opportunity to work with Metra to commence weekend service.
- A Metra operational consideration, which we understand relates to the Canadian National operations, is the location of our station on the outbound or east track. The switches allow for operation on the outbound main for outbound trains, as well as inbound trains. Having all trains load and unload passengers on the outbound track or platform 2 would enhance safety from the standpoint of the station and parking being on that side of the tracks. Metra commuters alighting the train in the evening rush hour would not have to cross two tracks.

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The Honorable Vernon A. Williams, Secretary

Surface Transportation Board

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We are concerned with the current slow speeds of trains on the EJ&E. In most cases, we observe that these trains to the west of our community run at substantially below the maximum 40 mile per hour rating of the track. As a result, long freight trains congest a number of high volume road crossings including Route 83, a state highway, in a neighboring community. Enhanced operations of the Canadian National on the EJ&E should be a priority

We also have a concern with the ability to operate additional trains on the existing Canadian National south of Leighton, as well as on the EJ&E. The movement of foreign railroads onto the tracks of the EJ&E and the Canadian National will only add to or supplant the current capacity issues and again continue to conflict with Metra commuter trains. This concern would include running additional trains from either the Union Pacific North line or the Canadian Pacific line west on the EJ&E using the newly acquired EJ&E to move freight around Chicago

Since the interlocking of the Canadian National and EJ&E is located to the northwest of our community, we have a concern with the current operation of the stormwater system in this area. Some of these areas hold a considerable amount of water between the various railroad road beds. After the acquisition, we are requesting that the Canadian National enhance the ongoing maintenance of these stormwater systems to assist in mitigating flooding of neighboring industrial parking lots. This may require construction of new storm water facilities

Finally, we are requesting that the proposed \$100 million that the Canadian National will be financing for improvements on the EJ&E provide the ability to enhance the speed of trains, which will reduce the negative impact to neighboring communities' major roads that cross the EJ&E. In a number of communities to the west of Vernon Hills, these movements will be a major impact to vehicular movements in these communities. We would also ask that grade separations be considered in a number of areas in coordination with State and County Highway Authorities to accomplish the safe movement of the increased number of freight trains. An example would be a grade separation at Route 83 and the EJ&E

We appreciate the opportunity to provide our input concerning this important change in transportation adjacent and within our community

Sincerely yours,



Michael S. Allison
Village Manager

MSA/ld

cc Roger L. Byrne, Village President
Village Board
Congressman Mark Kirk
Jim Kvedaras, Canadian National