

22/278

FD-35087

JERRY G. ARTHUR
Supply Chain Management Consultant
833 Shoreline Road Lake Barrington, IL 60010
847-323-0008 Cell • 847-277-1363 Home • jjarthur@comcast.net

January 8, 2008

Secretary Vernon Williams
U S Surface Transportation Board
395 E. Street SW
Washington, DC 20432

ENTERED
Office of Procurement

JAN 15 2008

Dear Secretary Williams:

Part of
Public Record

I am writing you regarding the Canadian National Railroad acquisition of the EJ&E Railroad Line. As a resident of Lake Barrington IL, one of the most adversely impacted communities and as a Supply Chain Management Consultant, I have carefully studied that facts presented to date about the proposed acquisition

I agree that there are significant benefits to reducing the rail congestion in the Chicago area. I think this proposal does not solve the larger regional rail congestion problem but simply shifts the issue from Chicago the suburbs. For the reasons below, I believe that the transportation benefits provided by the acquisition are outweighed by safety, congestion, fuel waste and environmental concerns. I urge that alternative solutions for relieving Chicago rail congestion be examined before the acquisition by Canadian National is approved.

These are my specific concerns:

- The Village of Barrington is the hub at the point of interconnectivity of the surrounding towns as the Village has the major north-south arterial roads running through its center (Route 59/Hough Street and Route 14), as well as Lake Cook Road, which serves as a major east-west route. All three will be impacted by the increased freight traffic as they carry heavy commuter traffic flow on a daily basis.
- The Village is also the location of the main Metra commuter station for the area – with a track also crossed by the EJ&E that services more than 1,700 commuters a day from the region.
- The majority of District 220 Schools (the school district that serves most of the Barrington area) including its only high school, its two middle schools, and 4 out of its 8 elementary schools are all located in the Village of Barrington.
- Emergency services will have increased difficulty while responding to emergencies with the prospect of multiple crossings being blocked at once. Delays in fire, ambulance or police help due to emergency responders waiting for a freight train to clear a crossing (or multiple crossings) could mean the difference between life and death for those seeking 911 assistance.
- Additionally, repeated train delays will unfortunately bring out the worst in people and it is reasonable to expect aggressive driving to make up the time lost due to gridlocked traffic. An increase in "cut-through" traffic in residential streets can be predicted by motorists who are desperate to find a way to their destination.
- The CN application states that the Barrington region will experience an increase of at least 15 new freight trains per day. The application, however, *grossly understates* the number of new trains that will ultimately pass through Barrington. The application only counts changes in traffic from a base of what moved at the end of 2006 – ignoring the additional container traffic that CN plans to transport from the Port of Prince Rupert, which only opened in 2007. That traffic is projected by CN to be 4 million TEU's or "20-foot equivalent units" by 2015. It also ignores rail traffic of the other four mega-railroads CN plans to admit to the EJ&E line. Finally, it only measures traffic increases for three years out, thus ignoring the growth in overall rail traffic in the Chicago area that is projected to increase by 80% in the next 20 years.

- All this traffic would be added to a line currently carrying only 3 to 5 trains per day. Given that freight trains can take up to 6 minutes to pass through a single railroad crossing when things are running smoothly, the greater Barrington region is looking at the potential for a traffic flow nightmare of immense proportions in the near future. This is further evidenced by the reality that one single 6,000 foot freight train (an average sized freight train) could block all four central Village of Barrington rail crossings at one time as the distance between the four is only 5,918 feet. Clearly, freight traffic induced gridlock threatens the functionality and future viability of the entire region.

Again, I urge that alternative solutions for relieving Chicago rail congestion be examined before the acquisition by Canadian National is approved.

Sincerely