

September 15, 2008

14196

Phillis Johnson-Ball
STB Finance Docket No 35087
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20423-0001

TO: Surface Transportation Board,

This letter is to notify the STB of my disapproval and disappointment in the pending acquisition of the Elgin, Joliet & Eastern Railroad by the Canadian National Railway. I have thoroughly reviewed the STB's Draft Environmental Impact Statement as it pertains to the Village of Bartlett, the existing EJ&E conditions on the environment, and the potential effects from the proposed acquisition. Although the STB's Draft EIS appears to be a comprehensive document, it falls short regarding the huge scope of problems from purchases of railroads from foreign companies. Furthermore, and most disconcerting, the STB's Draft contains false assumptions regarding the effects of those who already live close to those rail lines.

Let me first direct you to the enclosed map. My husband and I live on Snow Drift Court in Bartlett's Amber Grove subdivision. We have lived here for 17 years. As you can see from the map, we live near two of the three rail lines located on the west side of Bartlett. In all the years that we have lived here, we have noticed a marked increase in freight train traffic on both these lines since 2007. We have also noticed that, on the weekends when Metra has a decrease volume of commuter trains, the freight traffic increased their use on the weekends, which now disturbs our quiet side of town. We have also noticed that Metra has had to increase the length and volume of their horns to warn those freights that are also using the tracks nearby. The worst part of all of this has been the impact that this has had our daily (and nightly) lives. The freight trains have increased the number of cars (many with upwards of 60 to 100 cars) that now create rumbling sounds, shake the ground (and our beds at night) with their vibrations as they pass, sound their horns so loud that we have to turn up the TV or wait for the trains to pass when we are on the phone. They also create huge screeching and banging sounds when the trains are stuck or parked while EJ&E tries to get them going again (sometimes taking hours to do so) often in the middle of the night! A perfect example of this was last weekend, on Sunday September 8th, 2008, EJ&E parked more than 100 cars along the Metra line, parking cars *east* of Naperville Road, with more cars extended *west* of Naperville Road and extending sections of cars all the way further *west* passed Lambert Lane, and then continuing with those cars curving them onto the north/south EJ&E Line, as if these tracks were a train yard with those cars parked there the entire day. Then at 9:00pm Sunday night, EJ&E proceeded to connect all these cars, clanking, screeching and banging them *literally for hours*. We were still hearing them until at least 12:30am! Are there no regulations for this? I realize that the STB's report and recommendations are only focusing on the CN acquisition of the EJ&E line that circles the Chicagoland area, but let me give you some specifics of where STB's report is making assumptions and where the report is incomplete.

1. CN is a foreign company whose main focus is on profits and not necessarily safety or the US. In particular, CN and the STB have shown little interest in the Village of Bartlett, with only one mitigation plan as it pertains to the new Bartlett fire station just east of the EJ&E line. Furthermore, EJ&E currently operates with little regard for its Bartlett residents. As train accidents are shown in the news (like the train derailment involving a commuter train and a Union Pacific Freight train in Chatsworth, California, September 12, 2008) you can see how local emergency response carries the immediate burden in rescuing those victims as well as the training costs to prepare for such accidents. STB's

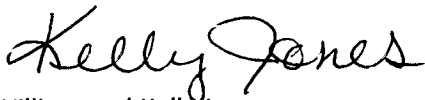
report indicates that "there are currently no commuter rail services operating on the EJ&E rail" and therefore falsely assumes "this acquisition would have no effect on passenger safety". Apparently CN says it willing to work with Metra regarding the STAR Line, there is no guarantee, and a false assumption, that once the acquisition merger takes place the Star Line would actually happen. There are certainly no mitigation plans for the Metra Line for which EJ&E currently runs trains and certainly there is no guarantee of funding from CN to prevent such accidents like that in California, with the burden and costs to be picked up by local and state emergency response.

2. STB's report assumes that homes near the railroad already have an equalized decreased market value; unfortunately with the increased train traffic those values are plummeting even more. I've seen my neighbors' homes for sale, with plenty of lookers, but no buyers as each time a realtor has a showing, inevitably a freight train goes noisily by with vibrations and horns blaring. The STB's report only indicates mitigation for horn noise for 7 cities designated as a "quiet zone". With many residents living near these rail lines on the west side of Bartlett, Bartlett should also be considered a "quiet zone" and the STB should insist that this mitigation be paid by CN.
3. As indicated in the second paragraph of my letter, the rumbling and clanking noises and vibrations from these trains has had an huge impact on our living conditions yet the STB's report does not include the west side of Bartlett in those analyses either. STB needs to expand their research into this area and insist that CN include mitigation for sound and vibration on the west side of Bartlett with specific considerations for the residents of the Amber Grove Subdivision, Castle Creek Subdivision, and those residents living along the CN Rail Line that crosses Route 59 in Bartlett to Munger Road for the proposed rail connection tracks in Wayne, IL.
4. STB's report does not include the mitigation for the Bartlett's newest park Riley's Run that will open in the Castle Creek Subdivision in 2009. The 8-acre park will be directly adjacent to the EJ&E Line. The Village of Bartlett has worked for years to establish and create funding for this park, yet the STB makes no reference or recommendation for mitigation that will certainly be needed for this park.

As indicated by our Village Official, Kathleen Melchert, and our Congressman, Peter Roskam, CN and EJ&E have made no commitments about long-term reductions in traffic, vibrations and noise from their trains that run through Bartlett, nor have they made a commitment for a the STAR Line, nor have they made any commitment for mitigation dollars to be used in this area. Mitigation will certainly cost us more money in tax dollars, yet there are no funds appointed at this time from local and state officials. Our officials are looking for a plan that addresses all the issues and unfortunately STB's Draft does not encompass all the issues. The process of pushing this acquisition through will certainly have detrimental long-term effects, with only a foreign company receiving the most benefit. I hope that you may improve your analyses and make corrections regarding the impact on the residents on the west side of Bartlett, Illinois.

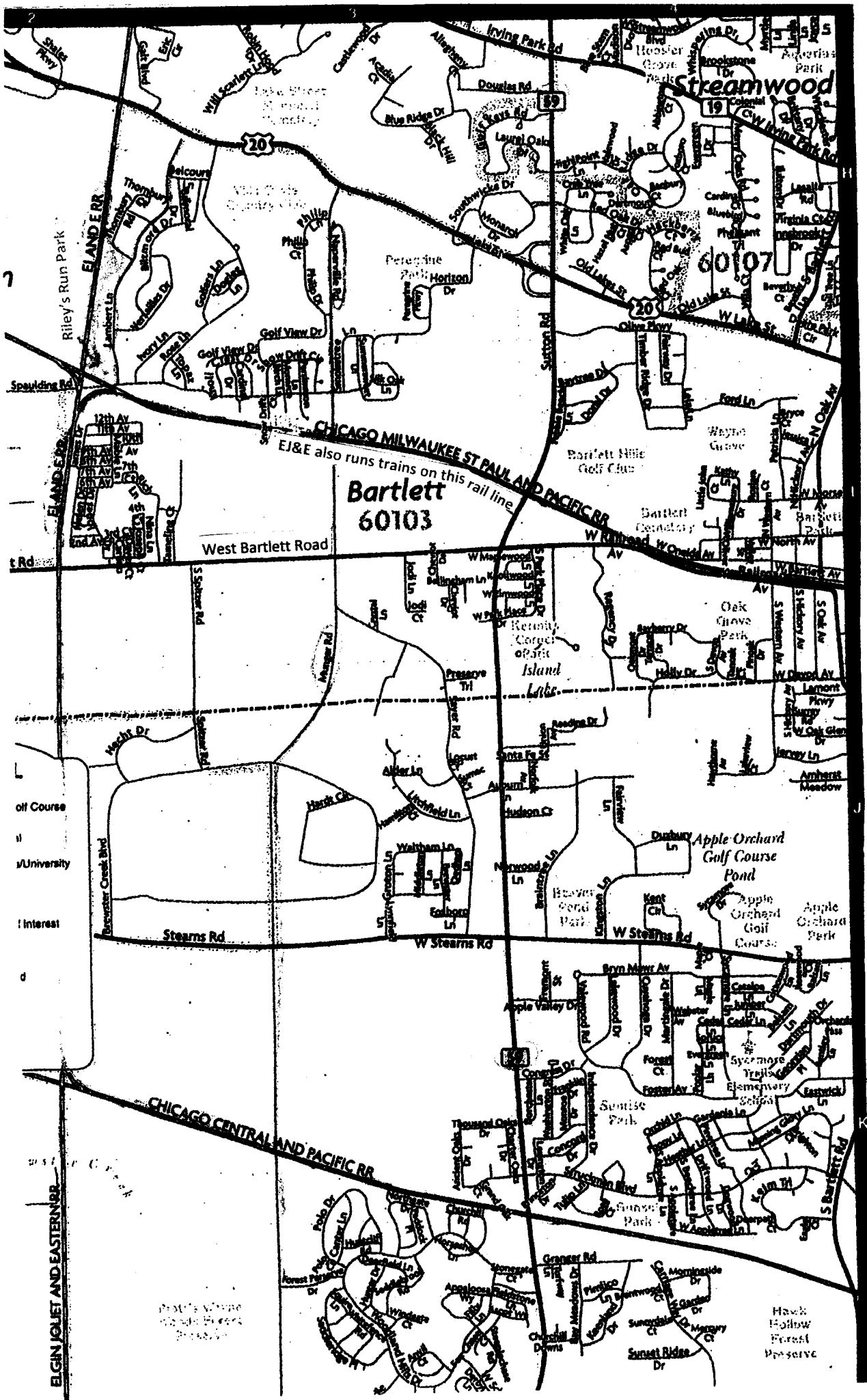
Thank you for this opportunity to voice my concerns directly to STB.

Sincerely,



William and Kelly Jones

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Bartlett
60103

Streamwood
60107

CHICAGO CENTRAL AND PACIFIC RR

CHICAGO MILWAUKEE ST PAUL AND PACIFIC RR
EJ&E also runs trains on this rail line.

ELGIN, JOLIET AND EASTERN RR

Post Office
Bartlett, Ill.
60103

Hawk
Hollow
Forest
Preserve