

9/18/2008

Dear Ms. Johnson-Ball,

I am writing to you about the issues I have with Canadian National Railroad's proposed acquisition of the EJ&E rail line that runs through Barrington, Illinois. I have grave concerns not only about safety and the travel pattern disruption, but the proximity of these trains to my home. I can literally look out my back window and see the trains that use these tracks. It isn't an issue when there are only about 3 trains a day, but if this number jumps to 20 or 30, my home turns into a train station. That will go for the other 186 homes that are also located in the Braemar subdivision of Barrington. With trains going by on the average of one per hour, the noise will be intolerable. I would hope that CN would be willing to put up some sort of sound walls when they go through neighborhood subdivisions, but I have not seen anything even being considered. If there were walls built, it would most likely have to come out of taxpayer money. I don't see how that would benefit anyone.

If this CN acquisition occurs, my home and family life will be diminished significantly. First of all, since our home is extremely close to the tracks, I can guarantee the value of our home will decrease by at least 10%. With the way the housing market is now, and with a home equity line of credit on the house, we would lose tens of thousands of dollars. With the current state of the US economy, no one can afford to have that happen to their home. If this deal goes through, I can guarantee we will start seeing many more foreclosures, and that is not good for anyone. The draft EIS mentions a negligible decrease in property value, which I find hard to believe. The home values have already taken a hit in my subdivision because of this proposal. The same house just sold for \$50,000 less than it was purchased for last year. That comes to a 13% decrease in property value.

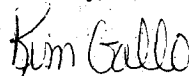
Not only does my family lose money, we will also be losing time and lots of it. Our subdivision is bordered on both sides by the railroad. If a train is going by, we will not even be able to get out of our subdivision for 5 to 10 minutes. This makes it extremely difficult, especially when our shopping is less than one mile away. These railroad crossings will also need to be crossed for all three of my children go to and from school. The Surface Transportation Board might not know the exact history of school buses crossing railroad tracks in Illinois, but there is currently a crossing known as "Seven Angels Crossing" about a half an hour from our house, in Fox River Grove, Illinois. Needless to say, a bus driver made one minor mistake, and because of that seven children were killed by a train. I do not want that happening in my town. The Ela Road crossing, just outside of my house, is one the crossing that was suggested by the STB to have an overpass or underpass built. I believe that signifies the importance of that crossing. The problem is that the taxpayers would have to pay for this construction since the money CN has allotted has already been earmarked for two crossings in Joliet. That means that not only will I lose a significant amount of money in my home, but I will also have my taxes increased. I'm sorry, but that is not fair to anyone.

My next major concern is for the local emergency responders. Since we are trapped on both sides of our subdivision by the tracks, it will considerably increase the response time for emergency vehicles around our area. In a world where precious seconds can mean life or death, no one wants to be sitting at a railroad crossing because there are an inordinate amount of trains running on the tracks. The Ela Road and Rand Road intersection is already busy enough, so I hate to see what adding 20 trains a day will do to the situation.

In summary, I do not have any issues with major purchases, but when CN railroad is refusing to negotiate the quantity of trains going through, the chemicals they are transporting or the amount of money they will put towards mitigation, I find it hard to believe that this deal is good for anyone except CN. I think any good corporation would be willing to negotiate with communities, but they have not shown any sign of flexibility. I feel they should be willing to cut down the number of trains to a more manageable number, remove certain chemicals from being transported through family-friendly neighborhoods, help with redoing at-grade crossings and adding sound barriers. I have not seen CN willing to be flexible with any of these issues, and I think it is a necessity if this deal is actually approved.

If this CN acquisition goes through, it would wreak havoc on the lives of everyone in the Braemar subdivision. This deal is something that I feel is totally unfair, and I would appreciate you taking all of these issues into consideration. I would like to thank you for your time.

Sincerely,



Kim M. Gallo
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