

January 25, 2008

Charles D. Nottingham
Chairman
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, S.W.
Suite 1220
Washington, DC 20423-0001

FD-35087

Dear Chairman Nottingham,

Fast and dependable train service is important to me and to my community. It will become even more important as gasoline prices continue to increase.

The application submitted by the Canadian National does not adequately address the future of the passenger trains linking Chicago to Champaign County. Maintaining a strong and reliable transportation link between Champaign County and the City of Chicago is vital to our continued economic success and quality of life.

In 2007, Amtrak ridership from the Champaign station topped the 100,000 riders per year mark for the first time since 1985, making Champaign the fourth busiest station in Illinois. Other communities along the I-57 corridor are experiencing similar record-high numbers as well.

This transaction could spell disaster to the continued success of Amtrak along I-57—as riders could experience longer travel times and increased delays. Also, since passengers connect between these trains and other trains at Chicago, deteriorated service on this corridor will impact passenger trains serving the entire country.

Therefore, I am voicing my opposition to any changes to the existing Amtrak service which increases route times and delays between the Champaign County and the City of Chicago along the Canadian National Railway.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,

K. Peter Kuchinke
Professor, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

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