

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

21709 Cappel Ln
Frankfort, IL 60423

September 3, 2008

Dear Mrs. Ball,

As a resident of a community which will be affected by the sale of the EJ & E rail line to the Canadian National Railway, I am writing to express great concern and opposition to the acquisition.

I live in a subdivision of Frankfort that lies within 300 feet of the EJ&E tracks. Currently, 6 trains pass through daily; CN proposes starting with 28 daily runs. That is more than 1 per hour and that is just a starting estimate. Once it purchases the EJ&E rails, my understanding is that these most likely will increase and also, that more tracks could be laid.

When the current trains go through, noise level is such that all conversation must stop. The current trains pull far less cars than the CN intends to rail. CN's trains will require larger engines to pull their two-mile-length cars. The heavier and longer loads will increase the noise level of wheel rumbles, whistle blows and vibrations to a deafening level. The DEIS states that the noise level would be at 65 and 70 decibels. Studies have shown that noise levels do not have to be high to cause permanent damage to people's hearing; low levels, if frequent, have the same effect. I would say that 70 decibels from loads that are 2 miles in length, 28 times a day is highly frequent and intolerable.

The proposed increase of traffic and the length of the rail cars will also impact the air quality due to diesel fuel output both while in motion and at idle for homeowners residing near the tracks. Frankfort has nine subdivisions, five churches, three schools, numerous parks, and a beautiful retreat/camp center that lie adjacent to the EJ&E rails. The noise and pollution levels which would come as a result of CN's acquisition of the rails will affect all manner of living in this community to an undesirable and devastating level for both human and wildlife inhabitants.

It has been reported that toxic waste and other hazardous chemicals being transported along these rails will increase from 2 to 14 daily runs. TRAC(the regional answer to CN) reviewed reports by the Canadian Parliament on CN's safety record as finding half of CN's locomotives, and train brakes to be defective...and that it has a "disconnect on safety issues between management and front-line workers". These figures alone are rightly a concern for all communities that lie adjacent to these tracks. Also, the DEIS reports that the total number of train accidents on the EJ&E will increase 28%. How is this good for our communities? The safety which we now have will be at a 28% increased risk of toxic and hazardous spills, possible water contamination, collisions and reduced police and fire response times. How is this good for our communities?

Frankfort, along with the neighboring communities of Matteson and New Lenox, is not an industrial nor a rural community where such increases would not be felt as greatly as ours. All three communities have had tremendous growth within the past 15 years and continue to grow. Frankfort has had to build two new high schools and a middle school to accommodate its growth. It now has three high schools running and the fourth will open in 2009.

My subdivision is one of the nine neighborhoods that lie adjacent to this rail line. The DEIS stated that surely, homes that lie along these rails will become devalued; and I am just as sure, that property taxes will remain high. This is not a win-win situation!

My last point of opposition to this rail sale is about the cost to upgrade crossings, put in fences, noise abatement structures and other public and environmental safety and health precautions that would be necessary if this transaction goes through.

The Canadian National is unwilling to pay the cost of these infrastructures, claiming they are unnecessary. They do not care about the impact on our lives that these changes will make. Will the cost of these infrastructures be dependent on the villages and towns that lie along the rails? Our communities do not have the financial means to pay the price that this acquisition will demand for the safety and well being of its people. So, does this burden fall on the citizens of these towns?

I liken this acquisition to being served a double whammy—one, in the total disruption and devastation of our quality of life; and two, in our wallets.

Perhaps a study of the physiological and psychological impact of such infringement on the lives and livelihood of the residents also need to be implemented.

I sincerely hope you will judge the prospect of the acquisition with a watchdog's eye for the communities involved.

Thank you for considering these points,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Barbara Amelio". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Barbara Amelio