

8-250-08 CAN RR #1.txt

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1 SCOPING MEETING FOR THE PROPOSED CANADIAN
2 NATIONAL RAILWAY COMPANY ACQUISITION OF THE
3 ELGIN, JOLIET AND EASTERN RAILWAY COMPANY
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9 STATEMENT OF:

10 EUGENE A. RAHMAN

11 AUGUST 25, 2008
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14 HOLIDAY INN HOTEL

15 500 HOLIDAY PLAZA DRIVE

16 MATTESON, ILLINOIS
17
18

19 CHIMNIAK REPORTING & VIDEO

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23 REPORTED BY: Fran Okrei, 84-1074
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1 MR. RAHMAN: My name is Eugene Abdul
2 Rahman. And I've been a resident of Park

3 Forest for 30, 45 years. And I also worked on
4 the Illinois Central that later became the
5 Canadian National until I retired in '04.

6 And there's a few concerns I have
7 being a resident of Park Forest being one who
8 has experienced and one who's worked them very
9 trains that are coming through there when
10 there was not as many, accepted trains on the
11 "J" and took them to Champaign, Illinois.

12 And I can see some was problems that
13 they are going to have with the big trains and
14 with the cold weather. They are going -- for
15 one, they are going across Western Avenue
16 which is going to be damaging to the property
17 values of Park Forest because that particular
18 crossing with that many trains, I can only see
19 delays and I can see where there's going to
20 have to be an alternate route when it comes
21 to -- that crossing will be taken out, really
22 unless they have a over or underpass.

23 Now on Archer the next street over,
24 there is an underpass that the train goes

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1 over.

2 So everybody will have to go to Archer
3 to get around the tracks. So they do have one
4 way but it's going to be kind of congested
5 since Western Avenue will be blocked.

6 And I'm saying unless I see something
7 different, I can see no way that they can run

8 32 trains at least 2,000 feet. And I've been
9 on trains that were they miles long that came
10 off of that line.

11 And when you cross Western Avenue, the
12 train -- say I forgot exactly the length,
13 10,000 foot train, if you don't have the
14 switches lined to pull into the yard there at
15 Matteson, you are going to have the crossing
16 blocked at Western Avenue so they'll have to
17 have some kind of system where the train is
18 held back at the crossing at Western until the
19 switches are lined and then they can make a
20 continual movement after they go over Western
21 Avenue, or otherwise Western Avenue is going
22 to be blocked for a while.

23 And then it pulls all the way up to
24 south to a place where they call Stunkel where

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1 they stop the train and maybe change crews.

2 I don't know how they operate now.
3 But in '04 they used to change crews there.
4 It's changed a lot since.

5 And that one particular area, I see a
6 problem unless they have some system where
7 they have automatic switches and when that
8 train goes across the crossing and they got to
9 line up, that takes them right into the yard
10 and down to the main if they got automatic
11 switches. But when I left, they had hand
12 throw switches.

13 So I understand that west will go over
14 to Cicero, that if trains come in from Cicero,
15 they'll have to have some system to hold the
16 trains. Double track with a siding or
17 something where they can only let -- I
18 didn't -- I think they are going to have some
19 type of "Y" or some kind of tracking system
20 that they can pull the train across to cross
21 it.

22 They are going to need it so they
23 won't block it. So -- but it's going to
24 affect the movement from the west and it's

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1 going to affect the movement that's coming
2 from Indiana. That's the trains that I used
3 to get.

4 And I'm saying that -- also I'm
5 wondering what's going to happen to that
6 right-of-way and that real estate that if the
7 Amtrack is not allowed to run, they can pull
8 that rail up and that rail becomes the
9 Canadian National with the highest real estate
10 value when they drive the traffic in many
11 parts of the country.

12 And so I'm saying there's enough
13 profit there maybe to invest in keeping some
14 of these suburbs free of traffic. But we are
15 talking about all along the lake. We are
16 talking about real estate that's the most
17 expensive real state in the world.

18 So there will be additional monies and
19 that is a possibility that Amtrack who is
20 supported by the taxpayers, everywhere that
21 Amtrack runs, the taxpayers pay part of the --
22 upkeep of the track.

23 A lot of people wasn't aware of that.
24 But in some kind of way they say they are

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1 going to try to run Amtrack. But if they
2 don't run Amtrack, then there's no reason for
3 them to keep the freight rails in. And then
4 they can pull the freight rails, scrap the
5 freight rails and sell all of that real estate
6 along the lake, the most expensive real estate
7 in the area.

8 So they will have funding if they do
9 that, they'll have additional funding from the
10 real estate that they sell, you know.

11 And the reason why I'm bringing up all
12 these things is because the traffic will be
13 drying up in the Chicago area but there's more
14 of a benefit with the dried up traffic than
15 there's -- I mean, than -- it's not really
16 helping the City of Chicago.

17 I know they are not -- I've been
18 there, you know. I've been across St. Charles
19 and sat there and waited for trains and
20 traffic and what have you, under the McCormack
21 Place at ten miles an hour.

22 And I'm just wondering -- now I'm in

23 Park Forest one time a freight conductor, a
24 lot of the things I see that it's a benefit to

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1 Canadian National and I see property values
2 going down because we have in Park Forest a
3 shopping center they are trying to rebuild
4 that's right on Western Avenue.

5 And if they have trains closing it
6 down, gas stations, people have to run around
7 there. There will be no interest -- there
8 will be no interest in even using Western
9 Avenue any more. They'll have to go around
10 Western and it's going to cause more
11 congestion in the Park Forest area. So we are
12 going to have a big problem.

13 I was hoping that maybe I come to see
14 this because at a town hall meeting or
15 something, we need a mayor or something that
16 can see all of these things. I don't see
17 anybody here right now but we need a mayor or
18 some of the village board here to see just
19 what's in the making.

20 I'm pretty sure they got two man
21 crews. One man can't handle the problems that
22 you get in the colder weather in the
23 wintertime. When it gets down freezing, you
24 have brake problems and you stop and you can't

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1 get your brakes released. I'm talking about
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2 common things.

3 what are they going to do about those
4 things? The train needs -- when it hits that
5 crossing at Western, there needs to be a
6 system that guarantees that that train clears
7 the crossing before it stops.

8 And so you don't move that train until
9 it's ready to go and when it's ready to go,
10 there needs to be a system that that train
11 does not stop until it clears the crossing.

12 I talked to the police and I used to
13 have -- I used to get a ticket wrote on me if
14 I blocked a crossing but I understand they
15 changed the laws and now you can't write
16 tickets for crossings being blocked. I'm
17 suspicious of that. Why is that?

18 You know, so it's a lot of things to
19 think about, you know. And Amtrack, they say
20 if this happens and if that happens. But if
21 Amtrack leaves, there's no reason to keep that
22 dried up traffic rail in place. So you scrap
23 the rail and sell the real estate.

24 We've talked about that. I talked

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1 about that 20 years ago. And now I see it
2 happening.

3 Basically it's a lot of things, too,
4 that people ought to look at. Because there's
5 going to be problems unless they make sure
6 that the crossing -- there's some kind of way
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7 they can keep traffic moving across any
8 crossing. Any crossing that big trains go
9 across, they shouldn't move until they are
10 sure that that crossing is going to be cleared
11 when that train starts.

12 otherwise, great possibilities of
13 having problems. I've been there for years.
14 walking trains in cold weather because the
15 brakes are sticking and you can't get the
16 brakes kicked off. The operator on air
17 pressure, when it gets cold, you can't get the
18 air pressure up high enough to get the brakes
19 kicked up.

20 You have to do certain things to get
21 the brake to crossing. When you brake the
22 crossing to let the traffic by when you close
23 it back up, in certain instances, there's
24 nothing you can do because you can't -- all

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1 you do is brake the crossing and leave them
2 broke until you can get your air pressure back
3 on.

4 That's about, you know, most of the
5 major things. And I'm concerned about the
6 property value in Park Forest because it's
7 going to ruin a lot of the suburban areas if
8 they don't think -- if they don't keep the
9 crossings clear.

10 And we have enough trouble now with
11 just a few day trains that come across

12 stopping and blocking the crossing, you know.
13 With 32 trains, we are going to have more
14 trouble. That's it.

15 I see they are going to put in special
16 tracks, what you call, wide where you can spin
17 the trains around or what have you to get them
18 in the right places and what have you. And so
19 if they put the right things in place, it can
20 happen.

21 But it has to be double track in some
22 places and -- at Western Avenue, is there
23 double tracks? I think it's single track at
24 Western Avenue. It's single track at Western

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1 Avenue.

2 Double tracks would alleviate but
3 that's more money to lay rail for two tracks.
4 That's all I can think of now.

5 I can't think of the name of the town
6 that I used to call when we changed crews,
7 that last town in Indiana. We used to get a
8 cab and we would head to leave the train but
9 we'd relief it, once it got on the IC.

10 Once they get towards the IC, most of
11 the trains will -- once they can get in that
12 Matteson yard, they will clear. That's all I
13 have.
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