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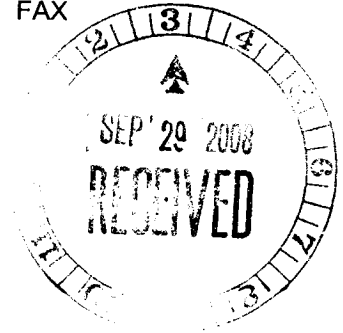
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September 19, 2008

STB Finance Docket No. 35087
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20423-0001

Att'n: Ms. Phillis Johnson-Ball
Re: Canadian National Railway Co.
Purchase of E. J. & E. Railroad



Gentlemen:

I am a civil engineer with 58 years of professional experience. I would like to make a professional and personal request that the subject action not be approved until all of the present critical grade crossings are converted to underpasses or overpasses, at the sole expense of the CN with no government funding, as there is no benefit to the taxpayers. This entire situation is totally a self-serving, profit making idea by the CN and does not in any way help those of us who live in the area, but could be seriously detrimental to all of the residents who will be affected by this proposition.

In the 1970's I was involved in the design of a railroad underpass in Franklin Park, IL. The Village had the same problem then that is posed by the CN for the grade crossings along the E. J. & E. track. There were a number of grade crossings in the Village, but one in particular was very bad, the one at Grand Avenue. Freight trains often blocked this major crossing for one-half hour or more. Grand Avenue is the major arterial street in town for emergency vehicles to use. In order to bypass the Grand Avenue crossing, emergency vehicles had to do detours that took 5 to 15 minutes. This is much too long to wait for someone needing an ambulance, or the victims of a fire.

On a personal note. On Saturday July 7, 2007 my wife suffered a heart attack and 2 strokes. After calling 911 an ambulance arrived in about 3 minutes. The very competent paramedics diagnosed at least part of her problem and called it in to the Emergency Room at Rush-Copley Hospital. When the ambulance arrived at the ER there was a cardiologist, a neurologist, a pulmonary doctor, an internist and the ER doctor waiting for her. I was later told by the cardiologist that if the ambulance had been 5 minutes later getting her to the ER that she would have died in the ambulance. Her heart and breathing stopped 3 times in the ER, so she actually died 3 times, but by God's grace the doctors and nurses were able to bring her back each time and get her stabilized after the 3rd event. Today she is well and enjoying life. But for 5 extra minutes in the ambulance, she would be gone.

This is an extremely serious situation. The CN's interest is 100% self-serving for more profit. Chicago and the close in suburbs would welcome the removal of the current freight train traffic, but why should it be at the expense to those of us who chose to live in the western suburbs? These people do not have 12,000' long trains coming through their hometowns, and blocking up to 6 crossings at one time. Also, most of these people knew about the train traffic problem before they moved to these suburbs, as the problem has

September 19, 2008

existed for a hundred years. They have absolutely no legitimate complaint, nor do the politicians and University Ph.D.'s who are pushing the CN agenda. I have read where the CN has said that they will notify emergency people in advance of crossings being blocked. CN has also said that it will provide detour routes to the emergency people. This is also a self-serving statement due to the large number of trains and crossings involved. The detour routes may take an extra 5 to 15 minutes which can not be tolerated. This proposal can not be done properly, even with computers, because for one reason or another the trains are not going to be traveling at the speed that a computer thinks it is traveling, or it may not be located where the computer thinks it is. This would be a monstrous disaster.

I do not believe that the people who wrote the TRACS legislation had any idea at the time that freight trains would be 12,000' in length, or that one train might block up to 6 grade crossings at one time. Saving lives far outweighs any benefits to commerce or competitiveness. I believe that the original intent of the TRACS legislation needs to be very strongly considered in the STB's deliberations.

From what I have read about this situation I believe that the CN is taking a cavalier view of human life. Human life is at the bottom of their priority list. I fervently hope that the government authorities will not be hoodwinked by the CN about the seriousness of this emergency vehicle situation.

By far, the overriding concern here is human life. Profit for the CN is immaterial. The value of a human life can not be measured. If the CN should make a billion dollar profit in one year from this proposition, it is not worth one life. Saving lives is the key to this entire matter - not dollars and cents in the pocket of the CN. Is the CEO of the Canadian National Railway Co. willing to give his life for this nefarious scheme?

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Max L. Calhoon

Max L. Calhoon, P.E., S.E.

cc: Honorable Judy Biggert
Mayor Thomas Weisner
Alderman Lynda Elmore
Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning