

July 23, 2008

Ms. Victoria Rutson
Chief, Section of Environmental Analysis
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20423-0001

RE: Docket # 35087, CN Purchase of the EJ&E

Dear Ms. Rutson:

As a resident of a community that will be greatly harmed by the number of freight trains that would operate through the region if Canadian National Railway (CN) is allowed to purchase the EJ&E rail line, I urge you to do everything in your power to ensure that the interests of the residents of our region are protected against the negative impacts of this acquisition.

It is my understanding that the Draft Environmental Impact Study (DEIS) on this transaction will be released shortly. This document will let the region know what we can expect in the way of public protection from your agency. I am very concerned that my community will be facing significant issues related to public safety, environment, traffic gridlock, emergency response times, and economic losses if this acquisition is approved. None of these issues are being adequately dealt with by the CN, which is why I am asking you to fully address these issues in the EIS.

Additionally, in finalizing the DEIS, please ensure the following two issues are fully and adequately addressed:

- CN's unwillingness to provide freight traffic projections beyond three years (a cut off that precedes the Phase 2 expansion of the major new port served by CN – the Port of Prince Rupert in western Canada). CN needs to provide capacity data and operational projections to 2020, at the very least. If the American Association of Railroads can demand taxpayer investments in rail infrastructure to accommodate a projected growth in rail freight of 88% by 2035, it is inconceivable that the CN cannot quantify its own long-range business projections involving the EJ&E.
- Due to the significance of the potential impacts to our communities and region, we must ask for a longer review period than 45 days to respond to the DEIS. Communities need 120 days for a due diligence review that can adequately examine the data used to arrive at the conclusions and to respond to the study's findings.

(over)

It is disgraceful that this is even an issue our community needs to fight to prevent. It would seem, with the degree of negative impact this acquisition would undoubtedly set into motion, my community, the other communities affected, and the thousands of families this would involve, should feel this possession a moot point; one we [the communities affected] should never have to fight to prevent in the first place.

I personally, along with every resident in my community, will have my life altered daily; from the excess pollution, increased noise, danger of toxic cargo, longer traffic delays, higher risks for injury at crossings, diminishing property values and the danger of finding myself in an emergency with no available EMT due to lack of available crossings. Lest we forget, the increased chance of a derailment, perhaps with the potential to cause toxic ramifications. These are very serious issues that don't affect only a few, but hundreds of thousands.

This subject should be closed and no one, no one, should be forced to fight over something as ridiculous as the sale of EJ&E rail line to CN Railway, especially when the benefit does not go beyond stuffing pockets. There is not one credible benefit to the communities involved.

I thank you for your time and attention to this very serious issue at hand.

Regards,
Gunnar A. Horta

Additional Comments:

Thank you for your consideration of my request.

Sincerely,

Name: Yunganne A. Hottucka

Address: 3182 Wild Meadow Lane
Aurora, IL 60504

CC: Illinois Congressional Delegation