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Phillis Johnson-Ball
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington DC, 20423

Ref: STB Finance Docket No. 35087

Hello,

I am writing to you today to discuss the proposed sale of the Elgin, Joliet & Eastern Railroad to the Canadian National Railroad. We live just a short distance from these tracks, so this issue is one that affects us directly. I'm sure you've already heard the major arguments against allowing this transaction to go through:

Restricted access to area hospitals. As a heart patient, I am comforted in knowing the Advocate Good Shepherd Hospital is just a few minutes away. Unfortunately, it's on the other side of the EJ&E railroad - and so is the nearest ambulance service. In the event of another heart attack, the time it would take an ambulance to make its way around all of the at-grade crossings, I could easily be dead.

Safety of at-grade crossings. Do you remember when a school bus was hit by a Metra train out in Fox River Grove back in 1995? Seven children are dead. If this transaction goes through, the probability of another accident involving a school bus will quadruple. That is simply not acceptable.

Increased congestion. The EJ&E crosses both main thoroughfares (Cuba Road and Ela Road) that pass my subdivision. These roads see a significant amount of traffic, helping to connect Route 14 to both Route 12 and Route 59. When a freight train is moving through, they quickly back up. On many occasions, I've been stuck within sight of my house, unable to get home until the traffic clears. This is, to put it mildly, frustrating. More than once, these freight trains have stopped altogether. This turns frustration into disaster, as there is literally no way for me to reach my home.

Increased fuel consumption. There are several factors at play here. Obviously, the increased time cars spend idling will dramatically impact fuel consumption. But there's an alternative plan that could actually dramatically reduce fuel consumption that will be impossible if this transaction goes through: The Metra STAR line. Mass transit in the Chicago area is currently focused on getting people into and out of the city. This spoke and hub arrangement was appropriate when most of the jobs were in the city, but now that jobs are spread out all over the area, people have been forced to commute by car instead of train. The Metra STAR line would make it possible for people to get to many other parts of the suburbs without driving their cars - and that would obviously save a tremendous amount of fuel.

Housing values. As a homeowner within sight of the EJ&E railroad tracks, I don't relish the thought of trying to sell my home in a future where railroad traffic has become a serious and obvious issue. I know moving the rail traffic out here will ease congestion for some closer to

the city. But when they bought their homes, they knew what they were getting - and their home prices reflected that situation. The same is true out here - we knew we were getting a modest amount of rail traffic, and the price we paid for our home was higher as a result. Reversing that situation can only be remedied equitably one way: homeowners in areas that will see reduced traffic should be subject to a windfall property tax to be redistributed to homeowners that will see increased rail traffic as compensation for the reduction in their home values. I understand that this may be controversial, but it is obviously fair.

I've heard the arguments in favor of this transaction, and I freely admit that some of them are compelling. But I believe that in the final analysis, this transaction is not something we should allow.

Sincerely

Michael D. Pearce & Anne Pearce

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