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317 Roslyn Road
Barrington, IL 60010
August 27, 2008

To the Surface Transportation Board:

Dear Sir or Madam:

Ten days ago, I was stopped by a southbound freight train on the EJ&E tracks at Cuba Road on my way back from picking up a pizza for dinner. After a wait, I started timing the cars going across the road, "*one thousand one, two thousand two, three thousand three, four thousand four, five thousand five, six thousand six.*" One car had cleared the two lane roadway.

This train was **not** traveling at 40 miles an hour. I have met very few on the EJ&E that are. The train was slowing (*twenty thousand twenty*), ultimate coming to a stop on the tracks. I turned around, went north, and traveled four miles out of my way in order to get home, again crossing an EJ&E track that the train had just recently vacated (knowing the tracks would be blocked if I traveled south, the shorter alternative). The pizza was cold. Fortunately, a cold pizza is not an emergency. Four extra miles times the tens of cars that turned around do add up, both on carbon release and other polluting emissions. And yes, as I traveled south on Rt. 59 before turning off, I could see the train slowly crossing the road ahead of me through Barrington, tying up traffic.

I wondered what would have happened if the freight train had been trundling along on a week day evening, rather than a weekend. Depending on the time, I could envision at least six Metra trains being affected. The EJ&E owns the right of way across the Metra track crossing.

How can there be any transfer of the EJ&E to the CN without the appropriate grade separation mitigation completed prior to or as a condition for the transfer, primarily funded by the CN - or any purchaser - from their anticipated savings and profits, and with the appropriate agreements in place for future public transportation capabilities (e.g., CREATE). There will be substantial dislocation involved in any mitigation, but at least projects have completion dates.

Representative Lipinski is short sighted. There is no guarantee from the CN that the Chicago route will enjoy long term relief. Indeed, there will be no oversight beyond 5 years, and if the Canadian port proves productive, both the existing routings AND the EJ&E routing will be run near capacity. No net benefit for any community - except Memphis - and many profits for the CN. Unfortunately, in the meantime, many communities' economic vitals will have withered.

It would be most unfortunate that public safety, pollution, community economics, and regional and national security issues be given such short shrift. The CN is exploiting weaknesses in the current regulatory environment to engineer a significant benefit for them at an incredible cost to an entire region. The role of a Governmental Review Board should be as a safeguard to ensure this slight of hand is stopped outright. Please consider your responsibilities as citizens of a United States founded with a sense of fair play as you deliberate your response to this matter.

Thank you for your service.

Sincerely,
M. Faye Sinnott 