

My name is Michael Fisher and I have lived in the Mundelein area for most of my life. I do not believe that the proposed expansion of Canadian National's freight traffic through Illinois will benefit anyone but Canadian National. They have suggested that shifting rail traffic will have benefits for some communities and drawbacks for others, but I believe all of Illinois will suffer. Turning the E J & E rail line into a freight train "superhighway" will decimate the dozens of cities it currently runs through. Housing values will fall, tax bases will decrease, businesses will close or move and traffic will increase. At the same time, there will still be rail lines in these other, "benefit", communities and I doubt that they will remain idle. As freight increases, these lines will surely be returned to their current high level of utilization.

Canadian National is just a business, a corporation, and as such it has no mandate other than to increase revenues. They have a deplorable record of working with communities, of dealing with the negative impact of their business. The schools, private homes, and businesses that currently reside alongside of the E J & E will quickly become hostages to the goodwill of a corporation that has shown it has no good will. When trains derail, when traffic fatalities occur, when hazardous materials are spilled, CN has shown itself to be magnificently unhelpful to the people, communities and environments that are affected.

Change takes time. Our cities have been built around a certain level of rail traffic along the E J & E. To change overnight from a few trains a day to greater than 20 trains a day, is to blatantly disregard the rights of people in favor of corporate profit. A gradual increase in traffic is acceptable and allows cities to gradually restructure themselves. An overnight increase of the magnitude that is being proposed here today is a recipe for disaster. To permit that much rail traffic before any system is in place to handle it is unimaginable. Canadian National would like this process to be quick and dirty – just increase the trains and let the towns sort out the problems later as best they can. A more responsible approach would be to build the necessary infrastructure first, and then gradually increase rail traffic as it can be safely accommodated.

Remember that the communities CN currently runs trains through have had many decades in which to adjust themselves to their current level of rail traffic. Houses, schools and businesses have been located with an eye to the railroad tracks. Underpasses and overpasses have been planned and gradually constructed. And even with all this they find the rail traffic intolerable. They are overjoyed at the prospect of fewer trains. If the impact in our area will be as minor as Canadian National claims, then why are these other towns so desperate to see them leave?

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