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CN/EJ&E Merger Proposal

July 7, 2008

Representative Peter Roskam

Washington Office
507 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
(202) 225-4561
(202) 225-1166 (fax)

Dear Mr. Roakam:

I have read several times your position regarding the CN/EJ&E railroad acquisition and I would like to add my perspective for your consideration on amending your stance on this issue. A long time railroader, now retired, I have seen the impact of the many years of deregulation and the negative impact this has had on the available routes (capacity) for rail movement. The unfortunate circumstances are that because of forced (cost reasons) elimination of some routes to remain financially viable, the nations railroad infrastructure is left with limited options. Just as you wish to preserve the EJ&E for potential passenger service, so to should you be looking at the potential for moving freight across the United States and particularly through the Chicago Area, in an efficient manner. There is no other way to develop a new rail route around Chicago, just as the interstate highways will continue to run through the Chicago area. The demand for increased freight transportation, unless the railroads increase their share dramatically will push our highways to gridlock in the next decade. The congestion relief that the combined CN/EJ&E provide will assist greatly in alleviating this congestion for some time.

Each train that the CN or any other railroad moves through Chicago reduces highway congestion by a minimum of 400 trucks. These 23 trains that the CN envisions moving via EJ&E equates to over 9,000 highway trucks each day that potentially could be added to the Chicago area highway system if this action is blocked.

Let's look at the facts surrounding the congestion that is claimed would be created by the CN/EJ&E merger. The trains moving across this new route would average 3-4 minutes to pass through a street crossing. These 3-½ minutes equates to only about 80 additional minutes of automobile sitting time each day for the 23 new trains. Each suburb these trains move through actually put up multiple new stoplights each year with the red side of the light forcing vehicles to sit for 12 hours each day, yet the public has no outcry over this. Could it be the noise from the train or the minor inconvenience is really the issue here. The opposition also states as potential all the medical emergencies or fires that could not be handled because of a blocked crossing. The potential for this is really rare and extreme in actuality. Your home district is Wheaton. I lived in Wheaton for many years and the inconvenience of the train is not dramatic and the UP moves over 100 trains per day through your suburb, substantially more than the proposal by CN.

The cry of issues in places like Barrington are at a location where the major congestion issue is the merging of highway 59 and Barrington road just south of downtown and funnel all traffic directly through downtown where both Dundee Road and Highway 14 moving east/west traffic also just happen cross within two blocks of each other. The congestion there is not caused by the railroad (what 2-3 UP freight trains per day) but the fact that Barrington has done nothing over the past 25 years to assist traffic flow. It is still a single lane road through town for all of the north/south traffic and Dundee is also single lane through downtown.

As for the STAR line and potential passenger service, the UP, BNSF, former IC, former WC, and CP all run passenger service along with freight service and the service is still great as the freight moratorium precludes freight traffic during peak commuter hours. The larger issue that should not be lost is the impact on the maintenance on the railroad by the freight systems. Without this added freight the commuter systems would be even "more" subsidized by the taxpayer than they are today. What is it today, 50% taxpayer funded?

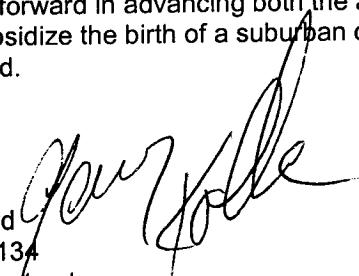
It is beyond imagination that rail commuter travel between/within the suburbs could support a commuter system on cash box fares. All you have to do is look at Pace to see what the rider ship would be like and view the cost/benefit relationship. All the Pace vehicles I see are mostly empty, no matter what time of day. With the small numbers of commuters that could actually walk from a commuter station to their destination without an additional cab ride being small, the choice because of expense and convenience will still be to drive, unless the destination is O'Hare airport.

With a moratorium on freight and their small number of trains to be running on the CN/EJ&E line a commuter service could easily co-exist. The added freight moving on this line and the resulting maintenance they would require of themselves to make sure they operate in a safe and efficient manner, it would be very helpful in even "beginning" to make the financials work out for a commuter network.

I realize the issue in front of you is one of "votes", but the logic of this transaction is so favorable toward moving forward in advancing both the ability to move freight through the Chicago area, plus help to subsidize the birth of a suburban commuter line that I do not see how you can ignore the greater good.

Yours truly,

Gary L. Kolbe
1572 Fargo Blvd
Geneva, IL. 60134
glkolbe@comcast.net
630-989-8001



cc:

Anne K. Quinlan
U.S. Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street SW
Washington, D.C. 20423-0001

Rep. Peter Roskam District Office
150 S. Bloomingdale Road, Suite 200
Bloomingdale, IL 60108