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FRANK OLIVO

ALDERMAN, 13TH WARD

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September 4, 2008

Phillis Johnson-Ball
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20423
Ref: STB Finance Docket No. 35087

Dear Ms. Johnson-Ball:

I am writing to you in support of the Canadian National Railway acquisition of the Elgin, Joliet and Eastern Railway (EJ&E).

The diverse community that I represent on Chicago's Southwest Side both benefits and bears the burden of being at the center of the freight industry in Chicago. The 13th Ward is traversed by the several major rail lines including the Grand Trunk and Belt Railroads and the Clearing rail yard.

The residents of the 13th Ward shoulder a disproportionate burden of the freight congestion in the Chicago area. When the Clearing rail yard gets severely congested, freight trains slow or stop entering the yard. The result is that freight trains can block the grade crossings at 67th, 63rd, 59th and sometimes even 55th Streets. This prevents emergency vehicles from accessing calls across the tracks, prevents parents from picking up children from school and workers from getting to work to time.

In addition, because Midway Airport lies a short distance from both the Belt Railroad and the Clearing yard, the freight congestion presents an ongoing threat in the event of an airline emergency.

The CN purchase of the EJ&E will provide not only some direct relief to residents in my ward but promises to relieve overall freight congestion on the Chicago grid which should ease delays into the Clearing yard and help the region as a whole maintain the vitality of the rail industry.

Sincerely,

Frank J. Olivo
Frank J. Olivo
Alderman, 13th Ward