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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

February 12, 2008

Washington, DC 20515-1313
Surface Transportation Board
CN-EJ&E EIS - FD-35087

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The Honorable Charles D. "Chip" Nottingham
Chairman

Surface Transportation Board

395 E Street S.W., Suite 1220

Washington, D.C. 20423-0001

RE: Environmental Filing

STB Finance Docket No. 35087

Canadian National Railway Company and Grand Truck Corporation – Control – EJ&E West
Company

Dear Chairman Nottingham:

I write to you and the Surface Transportation Board (STB) today to express my serious concern about the Canadian National Railway Corporation and Grand Truck Corporation (CN) acquisition of the Elgin, Joliet & Eastern Railway Company (EJ&E). While I support efforts to reduce rail congestion throughout the United States and especially on the overburdened rails in the Chicago region, I do not believe there is justification for placing that burden squarely on the backs of my constituents.

I have received numerous calls, letters, and e-mails from constituents, businesses and local officials throughout my district. They overwhelmingly agree that this project could have a severe negative impact on local communities and the daily lives of residents and commuters. If CN's acquisition of the EJ&E and the associated growth in rail traffic is going to be forced upon these communities, then the STB must take action to mitigate its burden on one of the most populous and fastest-growing regions in the State of Illinois.

As part of the environmental assessment of the impact of increasing from 18 to 45 the number of trains per day that travel along the EJ&E, I urge the STB to consider how this additional train traffic will affect:

- Traffic conditions in an already congested region.
- The ability of emergency personnel and equipment to respond to calls for assistance in a timely manner.
- School districts and their ability to provide safe and timely bus service.
- Area businesses and property values.
- The safety of area residents as the volume of hazardous material transported through densely populated areas grows.
- Air quality and natural areas adjacent to the rail line.

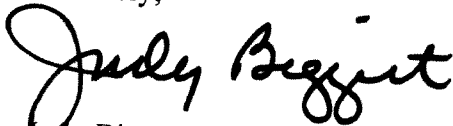
In order to mitigate these impacts, it is imperative that the STB require the CN to make a significant additional investment in regional planning, reconstruction of grade crossings, construction of additional grade separations, equipment and training for first responders, other traffic and safety improvements, and noise abatement measures. I also strongly recommend that the STB give serious consideration to the creation of a system-wide quiet zone that would minimize the impact of disruptive train whistles on local residents.

The CN also should explore all possible actions that will improve local access to rail service and encourage economic development compatible with communities along the line. Furthermore, the STB should carefully examine potential impacts of additional train traffic on the EJ&E further into the future than just 3 to 5 years. The region continues to grow and change rapidly, and population, traffic, and development patterns 10 years from now will be significantly different than even five years from now, affecting public and private investments in infrastructure and services. This also is why it is critical for the STB to ensure that local and regional planning authorities have access to the railroad operational data so that they can make informed decisions about public investments.

In addition to urging the STB to seriously consider all recommendations made through this scoping process, I ask that the STB sponsor a significant number of public hearings to give residents, local officials, community groups, and businesses ample time and opportunity to present their concerns to the board and comment on the environmental impact statement once it is complete. I also encourage you to schedule these hearings at times and locations that facilitate the greatest degree of public participation. My staff and I are available if you require any assistance in this matter.

The potential adverse impact of the exponential increase in train traffic along the EJ&E warrants careful study. I urge the STB not to rush its evaluation, but to take whatever time is necessary to fully analyze the effects this acquisition will have on the lives of the millions residents throughout northern Illinois. I appreciate your consideration of my requests, and look forward to your timely response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Judy Biggert". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Judy" and last name "Biggert" clearly distinguishable.

Judy Biggert
Member of Congress

cc: Phillis Johnson-Ball, STB