

Trains should be paying tolls like trucks are

by Thomas D. Mooney

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The Federal Government is unable to repair existing bridges, and underpasses. The U.S. Government can not afford to build C & N's necessary, and needed overpasses, and underpasses for a privately owned Canadian railroad company. The Federal Government lacks the funding for the long overdue Star Line on the EJE's tracks. The Federal Government even lacks funding for our nations AMTRAK line.

Freight trains would benefit from paying tolls to help upgrade the nations railroad tracks. Instead of many independent railroads the Federal Government by using tolls could create a safer, and faster flowing network of railroad tracks.

C & N has refused to fund the necessary and needed underpasses, and overpasses. This is why IDOT should be given the authority to buy the EJE's railroad tracks. By charging tolls IDOT could fund buying the EJE's tracks for the needed Star Line relief. People moved west to the suburbs to get away from the pollution, and noise from Chicago's trains. Why should many of them seniors, or struggling families have to pay to build sound walls, and underpasses to help a privately owned Canadian company?

Illinois residents do not want 2 mile long trains carrying toxic chemicals through their residential towns, and villages on poorly maintained tracks. The corporate record of poorly maintained freight trains, and tracks shows why IDOT should be in charge of the EJE's tracks. By charging tolls on freight train cars by the weight they carry IDOT could fund buying the EJE, and use the tolls to cover the already needed underpasses. Even towns like Denver impose tolls on freight trains by using IPASS systems. Other states use IPASS to identify the freight

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train cars weight capacity. Similar to trucks freight train cars should be paying by the weight they carry in Illinois too! By charging tolls on train cars like IDOT charges on trucks by the weight they carry IDOT could pay for the Star Lines needed improvements. Just like IDOT bids road work out they can bid track work out too by charging tolls. Chicago still should use tolls to raise C & N trains over their streets like the Chicago North Western Railroad uses. Like the Chicago North western used underpasses of IDOT's Waukegan Road before rising up over Techny Road to flow over cross-train traffic like is needed in Bartlett, Illinois.

Chicago could fund raising C & N's trains over cross-train routes by charging tolls like they did on the Skyway. It is harder to imagine it is cheaper to build needed underpasses on a 200 mile arc around Chicago. If it is cheaper then C & N Railroad, or IDOT by charging trains tolls should pay for the needed train improvements. Home owners should be paid for the loss in value to their homes before the C & N can move their trains. Forcing seniors, and struggling families to suffer financial losses to subsidize a foreign owned railroad line is wrong. Trains have been paying tolls since before most of us were born. IPASS transponders are already used in other states to register the weight each freight train car is carrying.

Foreign owned train companies are often controlled by HEGG funds. They prefer to run the trains without maintaining the tracks till a train derails. Train engineers complaints of dangerous tracks are just ignored. It takes having Federal Government track inspections to get their railroad tracks repaired. This is why every year we hear

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of poorly maintained tracks has derailed train cars full of toxic chemicals forcing towns to be evacuated. This could be avoided if the Federal Government started using tolls nation wide to improve the safety, and reduce the time it takes to travel by train. Changes are long over due.

Hegg funds prefer to let their locomotives leak oil onto the ground than pay for more expensive repairs. Daily most freight trains have to stop to repair brake hoses. Freight trains even block METRA trains for one, and a half hours to make repairs. They even have to stop to change broken axles on poorly maintained freight train cars. The foreign train corporations have a extremely poor record on their railroad track, and train car maintenance.

IDOT has a proven record of using toll fees to build needed walls to control even noise from railroad traffic. Along IDOT's Route 59 they used overpasses, and underpasses of all railroad tracks except for two. This is because IDOT needs cross-train tracks underpasses of their Route 59 to widen Route 59 north of Barrington. Several people walking trying to beat EJE's trains across the proposed C & N cross-train underpass died this past year in separate accidents. Trains waiting on trains has left half of Barrington's retail stores vacant. This is because the trains block the roads for too long. Without improvements to decrease congestion, and the noise from freight trains on the EJE's line it should be restricted for the proposed Star Line relief that Illinois roads already need.

IDOT has proven they are the most responsible party to own the EJE's railroad tracks. IDOT needs them for the needed Star Line passenger train relief. IDOT's existing

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Route 59 needs to be made wider north of Barrington. The town of Barrington is afraid to widen Route 59 till they have the EJE's freight train traffic put under Route 59. Adding more traffic without the train underpass is wrong. Traffic already stacks too far south of their downtown without adding 2 mile long freight train congestion to what they already have. Like Illinois charging tolls on trucks to fund their I-355's extension the same principle can be used to fund the long over due improvements needed for IDOT's Star Line train route.

By charging tolls on train cars IDOT can fund the needed train underpass in Barrington, and train overpasses needed in Bartlett, West Chicago, and in Plainfield. With high gas prices forcing people to drive less the fuel tax revenues are shrinking. C & N can not expect the Federal Government to subsidize the improvements their private and foreign corporation needs. Like truckers pay tolls for road improvements trains need to do the same thing. C & N not being a trustworthy neighbor is why IDOT should take ownership of the EJE's railroad tracks. IDOT has a proven record. Local towns want to buy the line for their needed METRA trains is another excellent buyer I would approve. A private Canadian Corporation has no business having control of our needed Star Line tracks.

The Star Line will help relieve O'Hares parking congestion too. People from Indiana have to use O'Hare's Airport for now. Gary Airport sits conveniently right on top of the EJE's railroad tracks. The Gary Airport also sits on the South Shore train tracks to downtown Chicago. Having high rise express train parking garages at Gary's Airport would help relieve O'Hare's parking, and Illinois

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road congestion too. This one reason United Airlines still supports Mayor Daley's Gary lake front airport. No trains connect Peatone Airport. The line that could be extended runs through towns that are full of gangs, and drugs. This makes Peotone the logical choice to put corporate jets pushed out of Midway Airport. Like New York Peotone Airport is ideal to use jet powered helicopters to fly the corporate officers to downtown Chicago. Peotone Airport should be used to stop corporate jets from taking over all the smaller airports.

Express Star Line trains can flow people from Indians directly to O'Hares terminals. Milwaukee's airport also sits near railroad tracks that can flow passenger trains to O'Hare Airport on the proposed Star Line tracks. The parking lots at O'Hare need IDOT's Star Line relief.

Another reason all the airlines support Mayor Daley's Gary Airport is it reduces air traffic congestion too! Planes flying south over Lake Michigan to O'Hare can be safely divided to either Gary, Chicago, or to Milwaukee's airport. These airports being already linked by the EJE's tracks is why IDOT should be helped to buy the tracks. By charging tolls IDOT could make the necessary improvements that the Federal Government can not afford. Like tolls are charged on trucks, and freight trains Illinois needs to be given control of their Star Line passenger train routes. The private Canadian trains need to start paying their fair share like truckers are already paying. The railroads in the United States need to start charging tolls to fund their needed improvements. Asking seniors, and struggling families to cover their corporate expenses is a poor way to run a business.

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IDOT needs to be able to charge the Canadian freight trains tolls like they charge on all trucks already. This extremely fair tax would force C & N's trains to fund their needed improvements to allow them to leave Chicago. IDOT has a proven record of handling toll roads for trucks and cars. IDOT becoming the owner of the EJE's Line is the only responsible solution. IDOT or towns along the EJE should be allowed to own and control the tracks. By allowing IDOT or local towns to impose tolls like in other states even Denver uses tolls on freight trains they can afford to pay for necessary improvements, and repairs.

Like Chicago used tolls on the Skyway to build it they should of considered doing the same thing with their railroad congestion. Chicago benefits from winds off Lake Michigan. Will County not enjoying winds off the lake has higher air pollution levels.

The Federal Government has Will County on it's list to cut road funding if they do not reduce their air pollution levels. A new fossil fuel electric plant was stopped because of Will Counties bad air pollution levels. This is why the Star Line improvements are needed. Will County can not increase their air pollution by adding dirty poorly maintained trains. Like California, Illinois needs to start requiring the newer locomotives that burn clear fuels.

The Federal Government has a responsibility to reduce I-55's congestion. There is no room to add trains on I-55. This is express trains are needed in Plainfield to carry people from Joliet, Crest Hill, Romeoville, and Plainfield to downtown. Naperville, and Plainfield already own the land for their Metra stations. Either these towns or IDOT should control the EJE's tracks.

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Sincerely Yours
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