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**BEFORE THE
SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD**

FINANCE DOCKET NO. 35087

CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAY COMPANY AND

GRAND TRUNK CORPORATION

-CONTROL-

EJ&E WEST COMPANY

**CITY OF CARBONDALE'S COMMENTS,
REQUEST FOR CONDITIONS, AND REQUEST FOR HEARING**

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January 28, 2008

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COMMENTS**

The City of Carbondale, Illinois is concerned with the proposed purchase of the EJ&E Railroad by Canadian National Railroad (CN) , because of the impact upon passenger rail service between Carbondale and Chicago area Carbondale, Illinois is home to Southern Illinois University which has a large population of students who come from the Chicago metro area Many of these students travel between Carbondale and Chicago by riding on the Amtrak trains that makes stops in Carbondale The three routes that travel through Carbondale carry over four hundred thousand passengers each year, and rider ship is up 70% on the routes between Carbondale and Chicago

1 The City of Carbondale is not opposed to the purchase of the EJ&E Railroad by the CN, we are opposed to the proposal by the CN to abandon the St Charles Air Line Route

2. Currently there are six Amtrak routes which would be adversely affected by the formal abandonment of this line. The City of New Orleans, the Illini and Saluki routes operate daily routes between Carbondale and Chicago's Union Station. If the St. Charles Air Line Route is abandoned and allowed to be acquired by the City of Chicago it is very likely that these routes would have no direct route to Union Station.
3. Passengers who are traveling from Carbondale and making connecting trains to other areas of the nation that run out of Union Station would be required to make transfers from Amtrak to the Metra and then back to an Amtrak train at Union Station. This poses several problems the most being the safe and efficient transfer of passengers.
4. The abandonment of the St. Charles Air Line Route would effect over 400,000 passengers on the six routes that go through Carbondale Illinois every year.
5. The abandonment of the St. Charles Air Line Route would effectively cause the discontinuance of the three routes currently going through Carbondale to Chicago. This would affect not only Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, but the University of Illinois in Champaign and Eastern Illinois University in Charleston.
6. Further the riders of these routes would be required to seek other modes of transportation to travel to the Chicago area which would increase congestion on roadways, fuel consumption, pollution and highway accidents. It would also cause the Amtrak employees servicing these routes to lose their employment.
7. If the St. Charles Air Line Route was allowed to be officially abandoned and taken over by the City of Chicago there could be an alternative route to Union Station. This would require that the Grand Crossing Route be re-established to connect the CN rail line with the Norfolk Southern (NS) rail line. This connection would not only allow the City of

New Orleans, Illini and Saluki routes to continue operation into Union Station, but also reduce travel time between Carbondale and Chicago. Currently the "CREATE" project, a comprehensive public/private plan to improve rail infrastructure in Chicago, has proposed plans to re-establish this connection, there currently is no funding for the Grand Crossing project

8. To allow the EJ&E purchase by CN to go through without conditions to protect the passenger rail routes they currently serve over the St Charles Air Line route would cause both economic and environmental harm to the areas and people served by the Amtrak service from Carbondale to Chicago

REQUEST FOR CONDITIONS

1. While the City of Carbondale, Illinois is not opposed to the purchase of the EJ& E Railroad by CN, the City of Carbondale would request that certain conditions be placed upon the purchase
2. That the CN not formally abandon the St. Charles Air Line Route until the Grand Crossing connection is re-established
3. That the CN maintain the St Charles Air Line Route without additional cost to Amtrak or the State of Illinois
4. That the CN be required to provide funding to help with the re-establishment of the Grand Crossing connection

Wherefore, the City of Carbondale, Illinois prays that the Board impose these conditions upon the CN's purchase of the EJ&E Railroad

REQUEST FOR HEARING

Petitioner, the City of Carbondale, pursuant to 49 C F R 511.41 (C), request the Board to conduct a public hearing in a downstate location, and in support thereof states as follows

1. The transaction proposed has ramification to those outside the Chicago metro area
- 2 In the interest of Due Process having hearings located only in the Chicago area denies those in downstate locations a fair opportunity to present evidence in opposition or in favor of the purchase
- 3 The City of Carbondale on behalf of the citizens of Carbondale would request that the Board conduct a public hearing at a location downstate along the Canadian National Railroads route that is served by the Amtrak routes of the City of New Orleans, Illini and Saluki

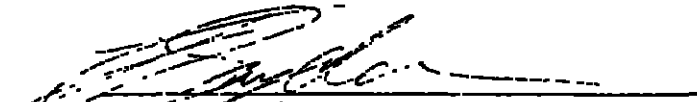
Wherefore, the City of Carbondale, Illinois prays that the Board conduct a public hearing in a downstate location.

Respectfully submitted,

The City of Carbondale



Brad Cole, Mayor



Lenoard "Jamie" Snyder
Assistant City Attorney