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Statement for Meeting of 2/11/08
Suburban Transportation Committee/ CN Railroad- EJE
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This entire topic requires a more regionalized approach. Moving a known problem from one set of communities to another is simply irresponsible. If the primary issue facing CN is congestion in Chicago, a single track line like the EJ and E is not going to significantly improve the long term capacity of the system.

A more reasonable approach will be to look more holistically at the issue. Consider studying a plan to build a new bypass spur in a less congested area away from the existing highly populated corridor along the EJ and E. This would allow a reasoned, planned approach to a complex issue, with long term solutions rather than short term stopgap measures such as the EJ and E utilization.

A responsible plan would factor in population and traffic densities and design a rail line that would have the least amount of negative impact. Other key issues such as municipal emergency response could be addressed so that features such as underpasses could be built at proper locations to ensure public safety and response. Schools and sidewalks could also be located safely away from a high density, high speed rail line. Homebuyers would be aware that a high speed, high density rail line is adjacent to their home, and plan their home purchase accordingly.

For all these reasons, letting CN buy the EJ and E is completely the wrong approach. Our communities and our neighborhoods were designed to accept intermittent train traffic, and many thriving communities line this rail line because the train traffic is not overly intrusive to our lifestyles. Changing the frequency of trains will severely diminish the quality of life in our towns and neighborhoods.

The stakes regarding this decision are very high. One singular decision to allow CN to proceed will irreversibly and permanently diminish the quality of life for millions of people that live near (and interface daily) with the EJ and E. Putting the interests of a single foreign conglomerate ahead of the massive local opposition to this plan defies everything that a democratic society stands for.

Suburban Transportation Board
CN-EJ&E EIS - FD-35087

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