

03338-021408.RADOGNO.ST-60439-0. N. E. E. J. E. - Ball

Other Submissions

In order to process your filing, please fill out the following information. If you do not know the docket number, please leave it blank and we will fill it out for you.

Please fill out the following information to help us complete your filing:

Docket #: FD -35087 - -

Subject: * application by Canadian National Railroad
First Name: * Sen. Christine
Middle Name:
Last Name: * Radogno
Address: * 410 Main Street

City: * Lemont
State: * IL
Zip Code: * 60439-
Email Address: * cradogno@gmail.com
Group/Affiliation: * State Senator
Message: February 14th, 2008

Secretary Vernon Williams
U.S. Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street SW
Washington DC 20423

Dear Secretary Williams,

Surface Transportation Board
CN-EJ&E EIS - FD-35087
Log and Distribution
Date Recd: _____

File No. _____ ✓

Scanned (Initial) _____

STACT #: _____

Cc: Original - Job File

3 - Phil V. L. H.:

I am writing with regard to the application filed by the Canadian National Railroad (CN) seeking regulatory authorization to acquire the Elgin, Joliet & Eastern Railway Company (Docket # FD 35087).

I am a State Senator from Illinois and I represent a portion of the suburban area around Chicago. The Elgin, Joliet & Eastern (EJ&E) rail line currently operates in northeastern Illinois and northwestern Indiana over 198 miles of track consisting primarily of an arc around Chicago extending from Waukegan, IL southward to Joliet, then in an easterly direction to Gary, IN.

The purpose of my letter is to oppose the sale of the EJ&E. I base my opposition to the sale on several extremely important and well-founded reasons.

First and foremost, is the impact the sale will have on the physical safety of my constituents, as well as those living throughout the Chicago area. Should the sale be approved, there will be a many-fold increase in the number of trains travelling on the EJ&E line. The EJ&E line crosses many busy thoroughfares throughout the region. Countless thousands of vehicles, including school buses traverse these roadways on a daily basis. According to the Illinois Commerce Commission, there are 133 public highway-rail grade crossings on the EJ&E line. I believe that this type of increase in train traffic in one of the nation's busiest metropolitan areas is a disaster waiting to

happen.

The approval of this sale will negatively impact the quality of life in the area. The Chicago metropolitan region is usually rated among the worse locations in the nation when it comes to motor vehicle traffic congestion. According to one regional planning group, "Chicago area residents spend more time commuting to their jobs than the residents of any other region in the country, except New York. Chicago area traffic congestion is among the worst in the country and is getting worse at a rate of 1.3% per year." Congestion cripples the economy and results in increased travel time, wasted fuel and a diminishment in the overall quality of life. Increasing the number of trains on this line, causing additional delays and probably delays of longer duration, will simply aggravate an already bad situation.

Additionally, consideration must be given to the environmental impact of this proposed acquisition. If additional trains exacerbate current traffic congestion and lead to more intense gridlock, the exhaust from these vehicles will diminish regional air quality. An increase in congestion also means an increase in the amount of gasoline which is wasted while these motor vehicles sit in traffic which does not move.

I would urge you to carefully and comprehensively study the manner in which the sale of the EJ&E will affect passenger rail (Amtrak) service throughout the Midwest and commuter (Metra) service in the region. It is my understanding that if this sale goes through, Canadian National would then want to abandon the line it currently uses (called the St. Charles Line). Abandoning this line would put Amtrak service into Chicago at severe risk. An increase in freight trains will also cause delays and possible cause scheduling havoc with Metra's commuter rail services. The Illinois General Assembly just recently passed legislation to provide hundreds of millions of dollars in operating assistance for the Chicago-area mass transit system. The last thing we need is to have the federal government throw sand into the gears of the regional transportation system by approving the sale of the EJ&E.

For these reasons, I therefore ask that you not approve the sale of the EJ&E to the Canadian National Railroad.

Thank you for your consideration in the important matter.

Sincerely,

State Senator Christine Radogno