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Allyson Huite
11532 Glenn Circle
Plainfield, IL 60585

February 4, 2008

Anne K. Quinlan, Esq., Acting Secretary
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street SW
Washington, D.C. 20423

RE: Finance Docket No. 35087

Dear Honorable Anne Quinlan:

The negative impacts to the communities in Chicago's western and southern suburbs caused by Canadian National's (CN) acquisition, construction and increased operations are expected to be vast. The environmental impacts of nearly 20 miles of new railway and increased operations could be significant; certainly, for those of us who live, work and play in an area where double-tracking is proposed, the negative impacts **will be** significant.

Thousands of children attend schools within a half-mile of the railroad tracks !

The dozens of schools that are located along this alignment will feel the impacts of noise and vibration – likely during construction as well as when operations are increased. The list of nearby schools is long and includes Peterson Elementary School, Crone Middle School and Plainfield High School to name just a few. For some schools, the warning bells may be heard several times an hour – can we expect schoolchildren to focus, listen and learn in that environment? The noise and vibration heard throughout the day from passing freight trains, in some cases for 10 minutes each hour, will clearly disrupt concentration.

The issues caused by the numerous grade crossings amount to more than slight annoyances for these children and include poor air quality caused by vehicle delays and increased accident probability. Because land use is such that residences are separated from the schools by the railroad tracks, children are crossing these tracks a minimum of two times each day.

My research has shown that 1) CN has frequent accidents and derailments and 2) due to the nature of the hazardous chemicals that CN transports, these accidents can be catastrophic. I am extremely concerned about the increase of hazardous chemicals combined with the double tracking. I fear that the probability for a tragic accident is high.

I understand that the Board will prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS); please do not rush this process as the impacts are significant. I look forward to the opportunity to review this document.

Thank you for your time and consideration,


Allyson Huite

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

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Anne K. Quinlan, Esq.
Acting Secretary
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street SW
Washington, D.C. 20423

RE: Finance Docket No. 35087 - Canadian National Railway Company and Grand Truck Corporation –
Control- EJ&E West Company

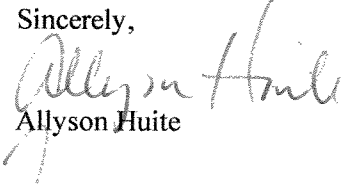
Dear Honorable Anne Quinlan:

I am writing to express concern over CN's acquisition of EJ&E rail lines, planned construction and increased operations in the suburbs west and south of Chicago. It is my understanding that CN plans to operate 15-27 additional trains through this suburban area as well as construct six new rail connections and approximately 19 miles of new sidings / double track. The negative impacts to the communities located along this proposed route are substantial. My concerns include the following:

- Noise and Vibration – There are sensitive receptors immediately adjacent to the right of way including hospitals, schools and residences. Of particular concern is the Peterson Elementary School near 103rd street in South Naperville. Audible warning system bells would be a near constant in this area with crossings at 111th street and 103rd street. With the school's proximity to the tracks, as well as its location between two crossings, the number of trains crossing throughout the school day would create noise and vibration levels that would clearly disrupt concentration.
- Traffic – In the Aurora / South Naperville / Plainfield area, if we assume an additional 25 freight trains with each taking 5 minutes to pass, this would account for more than 2 hours wait time, in a 24 hour period, at crossings. The delays caused by the freight trains will have a detrimental impact on land uses, the ability to transport students to and from school in a safe and timely fashion, and the ability for emergency response vehicles to cross.
- Air quality – For many segments of the rail line, train traffic will be increasing by 10, 20 or 30 trains a day, indeed, the final number is unpredictable. The emissions from railroad operations as well as vehicle delays will clearly have a negative impact on air quality in a nonattainment area.
- Safety – The increased rail traffic will have many negative safety impacts including:
 - Increase in at-grade crossing accident probability.
 - Increase in transport of hazardous materials and potential for derailment.

I understand that the board will prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the acquisition; I look forward to the opportunity to review this document.

Sincerely,


Allyson Huite

cc: Phillis Johnson-Ball, Section of Environmental Analysis