

## Other Submissions

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Docket #: - -

Subject: \* CN acquisition of E,J&E  
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Group/Affiliation: Park Forest Village Trustee  
Message: Phillis Johnson-Ball

Ref: STB Finance Docket No. 35087, in re Canadian National purchase of the E,J & E Railroad.

I am greatly concerned about this acquisition that is projected to quadruple the number of trains going through several south suburbs with the large number of grade crossing. These include several in Frankfort, Illinois, Harlem Avenue (Illinois Highway 41), Ridgeland and Central Avenues, Cicero Avenue (Illinois Highway 50, a very heavily trafficked road in Richton Park and Matteson), Main Street in Matteson and Western Avenue in Park Forest, plus several such crossings in Chicago Heights. These crossings impact regular daily traffic, as well as emergency traffic (police, fire and paramedics, plus school buses getting children to and from school). Governors Highway, midway between Cicero Avenue and Main Street in Richton Park and Matteson, is a potential detour route when it is not closed due to flooding caused by a heavy rain, which happens a few times a year.

I am also concerned about the approximately 6 miles of single track between Frankfort and about 1/3 of a mile past (east) of Cicero Avenue. I assume trains would slow down going from two tracks to one track and vice versa. This would also cause longer blockages of automobile traffic. I believe that the foundation (ballast?) is still there so they could lay a second track to expedite train traffic and lessen automobile traffic delays there.

Another major concern I have is the impact that 4 times more blockages of Western Avenue would have on the proposed rejuvenation of a small shopping center just south of the railroad tracks on Western Avenue. The Village of Park Forest is trying very hard to rehabilitate the shopping center and I am concerned that a large number of road blockages would discourage customers from shopping there. A solution could be an overpass or underpass, both of which have other problems, including cost and difficult access to a few nearby businesses. For the cost, I am very disappointed that the

current practice is for the railroad to pay less than 10% of the cost, when they get the major benefit from the deal, and local, state and federal taxpayers pay the rest. I believe that the railroad is greatly benefiting from this change and should pay all or well over half of the cost.

I live in Park Forest, about as far away from the tracks as possible so we don't have a noise problem, but we do have friends who live close to them and have a concern about noise disturbing them. The railroad company should be required to concentrate the noise during the daytime to minimize the impact on their sleep. They should also install noise absorbing fences along the tracks.

I have a friend who gave me anecdotal comments that Canadian National was not very conscientious in maintaining the former Illinois Central railroad tracks passing through Matteson and Richton Park. There should be a caveat that they make regular, thorough inspections of their tracks and other infrastructure so as to prevent or minimize derailments with possible hazardous material spills.

Lastly, the railroad should be mandated to utilize the best environmental practices to minimize air pollution, including smoke and odors.

I understand the benefits to the inner city and close-in suburbs but don't just dump it all on the outer suburbs. Maybe they should just build a new railroad to avoid these problems. Or maybe they could split the traffic two ways so no one gets all of the problems.

Thank you,

Kenneth W. Kramer  
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