



STATEMENT

South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association
Environmental Impact Statement for the
Proposed Canadian National Acquisition
of the Elgin, Joliet & Eastern Railway Company

Hearing on August 25, 2008 at the
Matteson Holiday Inn

Burnham
Calumet City
Calumet Park
Chicago Heights
Country Club Hills
Crete
Dixmoor
Dolton
East Hazel Crest
Flossmoor
Ford Heights
Glenwood
Harvey
Hazel Crest
Homer Glen
Homewood
Lansing
Lynwood
Markham
Matteson
Midlothian
Mokena
Monee
New Lenox
Oak Forest
Olympia Fields
Orland Hills
Orland Park
Palos Heights
Park Forest
Phoenix
Posen
Richton Park
Riverdale
Robbins
Sauk Village
South Chicago Heights
South Holland
Steger
Thornton
Tinley Park
University Park

I am providing this brief statement on behalf of the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association relative to the draft E.I.S. prepared for the proposed Canadian National Railway Company acquisition of the Elgin, Joliet & Eastern Railway Company.

First, we reiterate the points we made previously in our "Issues Paper" (attached) drafted several months ago and formally submitted to the Surface Transportation Board. Many of the issues and concerns we raised in that paper have been properly raised in the draft E.I.S.

Subsequent to the submission of our Issues Paper and prior to today's date, we have met on several occasions with representatives of the Canadian National Railway Company to specifically address and discuss our issues and concerns, which broadly fit into two main categories: roadway and railway congestion and public safety concerns, and potential economic development opportunities.

We believe that the E.I.S. properly identifies potential serious impacts on our communities and residents relative to access to health care facilities, as well as potential roadway blockages for extended periods of time. The E.I.S. also properly identifies specific roadways of critical concern. We have developed with the Chicago Southland Economic Development Corporation, the Will County Governmental League and the Will County Center For Economic Development a list of transportation projects that we wish to have included in the Illinois Capital Bill. Included in this matrix is a need for the State of Illinois to include investments in grade crossings along the EJ&E, as well as other corridors. We discussed these specific roadways and potential mitigation efforts with representatives of Canadian National and to date have not received any specific positive reply for mitigation at these vital roadway crossings from them. We will continue our efforts to work with the State and Canadian National to develop funding for the necessary grade crossing improvements.

The second major area of discussion with Canadian National representatives dealt with a commitment to work with our organization and our municipalities to maximize potential economic development opportunities afforded by this potential purchase. We believe that opportunities for substantial economic development and redevelopment exist if Canadian National commits to working together to attract the private sector to build industrial parks that should arise from this acquisition, both around the Canadian National intermodal yard in Harvey and the industrial yards along the EJ&E in south Cook County.

We have been encouraged by our discussions with Canadian National in this regard to date, but as yet have not received specific commitments that we would have hoped for. Again, we will continue our efforts with Canadian National on behalf of our communities in this regard.

Edward W. Paesel
Executive Director



Proposed Canadian National Railway Acquisition
Of the Elgin, Joliet and Eastern Railway

South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association's
Issues Paper

Introduction

The South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association (SSMMA) represents 42 communities in southern Cook and Will Counties and is the designated sub-regional transportation planning organization through the CMAP MPO process. In addition, the Association works cooperatively with the Chicago Southland Economic Development Corporation (CSEDC) on matters of economic development opportunities in our sub-region.

SSMMA has filed with the Surface Transportation Board as a party of record in the proposed purchase of the EJ&E Railroad by the Canadian National Railway Corporation. The Association hosted a briefing for community officials on November 20, 2007 and a representative of Canadian National made a presentation and responded to questions.

Subsequently, the Association's Transportation Advisory Group held a meeting on December 18, 2007 and invited communities represented by SSMMA to attend. At this meeting a number of issues related to the proposed purchase were discussed. The Association's Executive Director Ed Paesel was directed to prepare an issues paper for consideration and approval by SSMMA's Executive Committee on January 3, 2008 and SSMMA's Transportation Committee on January 8, 2008. This issues paper was discussed and approved by both committees and is the basis upon which SSMMA will seek to work cooperatively with Canadian National and the Surface Transportation Board throughout this process.

Economic Development Opportunities

The SSMMA and CSEDC seek to work with the Canadian National Railway Corporation to assure that existing industrial facilities currently served by EJ&E are assured rail service after the purchase. In addition, we seek to work with CN and communities such as Riverdale, Dolton and Blue Island to maximize opportunities for rail served industrial/warehousing development along current CN rail lines.

Burnham
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Flossmoor
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Hazel Crest
Homer Glen
Homewood
Lansing
Lynwood
Markham
Matteson
Midlothian
Mokena
Monee
New Lenox
Oak Forest
Olympia Fields
Orland Hills
Orland Park
Palos Heights
Park Forest
Phoenix
Posen
Richton Park
Riverdale
Robbins
Sauk Village
South Chicago Heights
South Holland
Steger
Thornton
Tinley Park
University Park

In addition, SSMMA and CSEDC will seek to work with CN and communities located along the EJ&E RR to identify existing industrial/distribution centers and to maximize their opportunities to develop, as well as identify potential new larger scale rail served industrial/distribution sites along the EJ&E RR that could be supported by the local communities.

The Association believes that there are many opportunities for positive economic development activities both for our local communities, as well as Canadian National Railway, providing we work cooperatively from the start in concert with our communities.

Star Line

The Association has long supported the Metra's Star Line as an important commuter rail option for the Chicago region. The Phase II Star Line project anticipates using the EJ&E Railroad right-of-way in the southern suburbs from Joliet eastward to Lynwood at the state line.

We continue to support the development of the Star Line and are seeking clarification from Canadian National of its intent to cooperate with Metra and our communities on this important project, as well as the conditions under which Metra will be allowed to use the existing tracks or right-of-way.

Potential Community Impacts

In the course of two meetings with many of the municipalities potentially affected by the purchase, we received a number of concerns caused by the potential tripling of traffic on the EJ&E.

Several of our communities, such as South Holland, Dolton and Lansing have expressed positive feedback on the purchase due to the potential reduction of train traffic on existing CN Lines in their communities and the resulting decrease in traffic congestion at various intersections.

Communities including Chicago Heights, South Chicago Heights, Park Forest, Matteson and Frankfort expressed concerns about at-grade crossings being blocked by more than 30 trains per day, each potentially a mile and a half long or longer. Major roads such as Cottage Grove Avenue, East End Avenue, Chicago Road and Western Avenues are vital routes for emergency vehicles and ambulances to St. James Hospital in Chicago Heights. In addition, both commercial and automobile traffic may be severely affected by long delays at at-grade crossings.

Currently in the area described above, there are no grade-separated crossings between IL-394 on the east and Orchard Avenue on the west, a distance of approximately 7 miles. A similar situation exists with no grade separated

crossings from Governors Highway in Matteson westward for many miles except at I-57.

We believe that additional grade separated crossings must be identified and constructed to mitigate these critical concerns. The SBC, Canadian National, the Illinois Department of Transportation, the Cook and Will County Highway Departments and the CREATE Program team must work with local communities and SSMMA to identify the appropriate intersections, as well as identifying the necessary funding to complete these grade separations as soon as possible.

In addition, concerns were expressed about impacts on the Villages of Matteson and Park Forest on the proposed new rail switching connection between the EJ&E and CN relative to impacts on the Matteson downtown district and the Metra commuter rail station. All parties must work with those communities to address these serious concerns.

Another concern expressed in several communities is the impact of substantially more trains per day from a noise perspective on existing residential neighborhoods. We believe that noise walls or other acceptable types of noise mitigation measures should be explored in areas identified by the municipalities.

Further concerns were raised by several communities concerning the large increase of hazardous materials being transported along the EJ&E Rail Line. CN must work cooperatively with emergency services in the region to identify hazardous materials being transported, devise an emergency response plan and provide funding to communities to enable them to purchase the special equipment necessary to respond to an incident.

The Association also believes that the CREATE Project team, in light of this potential purchase and the substantial impact on altering the traffic flow in the Chicago area, should reprioritize CREATE funded projects and allocate additional resources to projects in the southern suburbs. This would especially be true for funding for additional grade separations described earlier, as well as rail to rail separations that would benefit traffic flow in our region.

Summary

In summary, the Association, the CSEDC and our municipalities seek to work with Canadian National and the Surface Transportation Board in a cooperative manner to maximize the potential positive economic benefits and mitigate the potential negative impacts identified in this paper.

We will also work through the formal STB process and actively participate in the Environmental Impact Statement process to identify additional concerns, as well as mitigation strategies.