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Docket #: - 35087 -

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02964

I am writing with regard to STB Finance Docket No. 35087, the proposed Canadian National Railway Company acquisition of the Elgin, Joliet and Eastern Railway Company (EJ&E). My primary concern is with the highly populated portion of the EJ&E route running between Naperville and Aurora, which was ignored when Canadian National scheduled its scoping meetings. This includes portions of line segments EJE-10 and EJE-11. It is intended to provide input to your Environmental Impact Statement.

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

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I have no doubt that there is a need to transport goods within our country, and that the railroads are generally the most efficient and cost-effective method for the transportation of goods. I have no doubt that current routes used by Canadian National to transport goods through Chicago are congested, and that this fact increases the cost and decreases the efficiency of the shipments. The proposed acquisition has the primary purpose of improving the economic situation for Canadian National by routing shipments around Chicago, rather than through Chicago. This may be possible if the environmental impact of the proposal is recognized, and some of the economic benefits to Canadian National are invested to mitigate the impact on the community.

The portion of the EJ&E route which is in either western Naperville or in eastern Aurora includes 16 railroad crossings of streets, 75% of which are currently at-grade. The southern half of that portion currently has only at-grade railroad crossings. This is a rapidly growing area with a population of roughly 350,000 people. This situation is marginally acceptable presently, and will be neither safe nor sensible if the proposal is completed, imposing four times the train traffic across these at-grade crossings.

The portion of the EJ&E route, which is in either western Naperville or in eastern Aurora, parallels Route 59, the major traffic artery within 1 mile to the East of the tracks. Route 59 is a major cause of life-threatening auto accidents, yet Rush Copley hospital where these life-threatening injuries must be treated requires crossing the EJ&E tracks, usually across at-grade crossings. It would put many of these injuries at unreasonable

HDR

risk of death to drastically increase train traffic without having an overpass constructed to replace the at-grade crossings. Will Canadian National fund and complete the construction of the necessary overpass for at least half of these intersections, prior to increasing train traffic in this area?