



ILLINOIS CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE

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March 2, 2008

Mr. Vernon A. Williams, Secretary
Surface Transportation Board
395 East Street, Southwest
Washington, DC 20423-0001

Dear Secretary Williams:

On behalf of the Illinois Chamber of Commerce, I am writing to express our support for CN's proposed acquisition of EJ&E West Company. This transaction will improve rail operations in and beyond the Chicago area by allowing more efficient train operations and reducing congestion. This transaction will strengthen CN's ability to serve customers and streamline rail operations, not only in Chicago, but also throughout CN's network.

A centerpiece of the Illinois economy is its position as a transportation hub for the nation. Unfortunately, a major component of our transportation system is at risk. While Chicago is a major center for rail transportation, its prominence is threatened by severe congestion on the rail lines, which in turn lead to blocked crossings, train idling, and other challenges.

CN's purchase and utilization of the EJ&E will alleviate these problems by moving trains off of CN's lines in the Chicago urban core. This will streamline remaining rail operations in the city and reduce vehicular interference. By minimizing delays and associated locomotive idling time, the transaction will also benefit the regional environment.

While the Chamber is very supportive of the acquisition it is also an advocate for reasonable mitigation of travel disruptions in affected communities as well as creation of the vital STAR Line rail project.

Rail is vital to Illinois' economy. If we are to continue to grow, rail transportation must have the capacity to accommodate that growth. Current delays in Chicago threaten our economy and require immediate attention. Approval of the CN acquisition is an important first step.

Thank you for your consideration of the Illinois Chamber's views. Please include my comments in the public docket for this proceeding.

Sincerely,

Doug Whitley
President and CEO

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

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