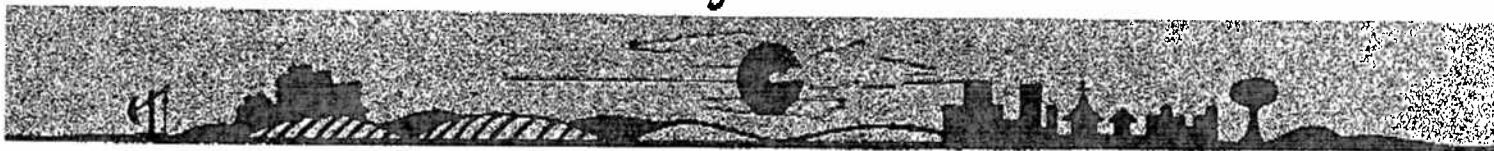


02189

The City of Salem



The Spirit and Space of Southern Illinois

101 South Broadway, Salem, Illinois 62881

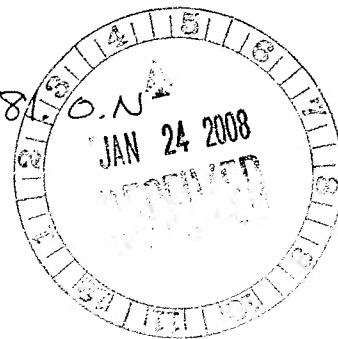
Phone 618/548-2222, Fax 618/548-5330

Office of the Mayor

Leonard E. Ferguson

January 24, 2008

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Mr. Charles Nottingham
Surface Transportation Board
395 E. Street, S.W. Suite 1220
Washington, D.C. 20423-001

FAX: 202 245-0458

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

Dear Mr. Nottingham:

The Mayor and Salem City Council wish to go on record as being opposed to CN Railroads' Petition to the STB regarding the above referenced Finance Docket No. 35087.

This petition would result in stranding Amtrak and its users and effectively eliminate the City of New Orleans which operates daily round trips between Chicago and New Orleans, and the Illini and Saluki, which together provide two daily round trips between Chicago and Champaign, Centralia and Carbondale.

We support Amtrak's recommendation on the new route known as the "Grand Crossing Route" which would be an alternative should the Air Line Route be eliminated. However, no such route elimination should be granted until such time as the Grand Crossing Route can be fully funded and is completed.

Over 400,000 people use Amtrak into Union Station annually. We agree that not providing access to Union Station would result in a serious economic set back for all of Illinois and would be of particular hardship to the thousands of students in the Champaign and Carbondale area who rely upon this service daily.

Downstate communities such as Centralia who report having 15,000 Amtrak passengers annually would be dealt an additional economic blow to its already struggling regional economy. This is a regional issue affecting all communities in proximity to Amtrak service points throughout the State of Illinois.

We therefore respectfully request that CN's position in this matter not be granted until such time that the acceptable alternative is in place.

Sincerely,

CITY OF SALEM, ILLINOIS

Leonard E. Ferguson,
Mayor

LEF:jm

Surface Transportation Board

CN-EJ&E EIS - FD-35087

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