

August 25, 2008

Dear STB Boardmembers,

I am writing in reference to STB Finance Docket # 35087, the Canadian National proposal to acquire the EJ & E.

I live in Frankfort, IL in central Will County. We love the trains out here, especially Metra passenger trains that take us to our jobs in Chicago. We also see and hear freight trains on the EJ & E come through here regularly.

Frankfort is a very nice place to live. I have lived here with my family for over 5 years. We do not live by the tracks directly. I do cross the tracks regularly at 116th Street to friends' homes and to Hickory Creek Middle School. There is a great sense of community in Frankfort that I am proud to say I am a part of.

You may think at first that the opposition from Frankfort and other communities along the EJ & E would be to unfairly guard their quality of life. I would like the record to show that although the CN proposal will negatively affect our community's quality of life, I am opposing it because it is bad on so many different levels.

I must disclose that I am a transportation planner by profession and that fact will color how I respond. One of the main reasons I oppose the proposal is because it will severely jeopardize the region's chances of realizing suburb-to-suburb commuter rail service on the EJ & E. Working for the Will County municipal league in the mid-1990's, I was involved in the region's attempt to establish interest in a feasibility study for commuter rail on the EJ & E from Waukegan, Illinois to northwest Indiana. Suburb-to-suburb travel in the Chicago metropolitan area would be truly revolutionary. As great as our passenger rail service is, all lines lead into the City of Chicago. It would be a great boon to our area if people could hop on the Metra trains and go to work in Joliet, Aurora and points further north. The feasibility studies are already partially completed and should be part of the record. Resources available in our region need to be directed to projects that can make suburb-to-suburb passenger rail service a reality.

Federal and state funding for rail projects, including new suburb-to-suburb service, is already scarce. I am opposed to the CN proposal for its heavy financial impact on local communities and the state. The current proposal stipulates very little funding from CN for improvements to rail crossings. Local communities are going to need to implement expensive improvements just to ensure their citizens safety and well-being. CN benefits from this acquisition, yet it is the taxpayers who pay for the improvements. This is bad public policy. The draft EIS identified 15 of 30 crossings as in need of grade separations, up to \$1 million each, but asked CN to pay for no more than 50% of the costs. There is not currently millions of dollars in our state and local budgets and there are no realistic future scenarios to support that.

I support continued funding for the work of CREATE, Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency, for its comprehensive, intergovernmental solutions to many of our rail issues. Will County has become a key player in the logistics industry serving as an inland port for the distribution of containers of goods throughout the Midwest. Freight traffic has increased overall for the Chicago area, with more increases planned for the future. We do need to address the important issue of more quickly and efficiently moving goods as a region. Shifting some freight rail traffic from the already congested communities is a short-term strategy, however, and CN's proposal simply siphons even more resources away from their needs. As written, the draft EIS benefits CN, a foreign-owned company, to the detriment of all other railroads in Chicago. That is probably one of the best anti-trust, anti-competitive arguments for opposing CN's plan.

In ending, I would like to mention my friends, Kristen and Scott Linke. We know them through our sons and baseball. They hosted a very nice pool party at their home for the baseball team families. Their home backs up to the EJ & E tracks and always has. With the CN proposal, their investment in their home is in jeopardy. They will not be able to sell their home in the future with longer, louder and more noxious trains nearby, without taking a financial loss. The draft EIS does not even estimate what the financial loss will be to the Linke's and others whose property values decline, nor does it give CN any responsibility for that loss.

Thank you for the opportunity to state my opposition to the draft EIS for the CN acquisition of the EJ & E.

Sincerely,



Alicia C. Hanlon

cc: The Hon. Jim Holland, Mayor, Village of Frankfort
The Hon. Richard Durbin, U.S. Senator
The Hon. Barack Obama, U.S. Senator
The Hon. Peter Roskam, IL-6
The Hon. Melissa Bean, IL-8
The Hon. Judy Biggert, IL-13
The Hon. Bill Foster, D-14