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Hon. Secretary Vernon Williams
U.S. Surface Transportation Board
395 E St., SW
Washington, DC

Secretary Williams,

I am writing to urge the Transportation Board to reject Canadian National Railroad's proposed acquisition of the Elgin, Joliet & Eastern Railway Company (EJ&E) - Docket #35087. Canadian National's purchase of this line poses significant safety, environmental and quality of life concerns for Chicago's northwest suburbs.

According to Canadian National's own estimates, this acquisition will result in a 400-500% increase in freight train traffic on this line. This increase poses a significant threat to the safety of Illinoisans. The EJ&E line crosses through busy and populated areas such as Barrington and Lake Zurich, and thousands of vehicles – including school buses, ambulances and fire engines – cross these tracks every day.

According to the Illinois Commerce Commission there are 133 public highway-rail grade crossings on the EJ&E line. A dramatic increase in freight train traffic would increase the potential for accidents at these crossings, drastically increase automobile congestion in an area with chronic and constant traffic delays, and could pose a significant problem for first-responders who could be stuck waiting for several minutes for a freight train to pass.

In addition to significant safety issues, this acquisition also poses serious environmental concerns and would jeopardize the rights of property owners along the EJ&E line. A 400-500% increase in freight train traffic on this line would lead to higher levels of noise and air pollution. The increases in air pollution would seriously diminish the region's air quality. The dramatic increases in noise pollution would jeopardize the rights of land owners, who would see the value of their land, houses and businesses diminished by this deal.

Thank you for inviting public comment on this matter. Because of significant safety, environmental and quality of life concerns for the residents of Chicago's northwest suburbs who will be negatively impacted by this deal, I urge you to reject Canadian National Railroad's proposed acquisition of the Elgin, Joliet & Eastern Railway Company.

Sincerely,

Steve Sauerberg