

MELISSA L. BEAN
8TH DISTRICT, ILLINOIS

COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS
AND CONSUMER CREDIT
SUBCOMMITTEE ON CAPITAL MARKETS, INSURANCE,
AND GOVERNMENT-SPONSORED ENTERPRISES

COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS
CHAIR, SUBCOMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND TAX
SUBCOMMITTEE ON REGULATIONS, HEALTHCARE,
AND TRADE

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1308

WASHINGTON OFFICE:
318 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
(202) 225-3711

DISTRICT OFFICE:
1622 ALGONQUIN RD., SUITE L
SCHAUMBURG, IL 60173
(847) 925-0265

www.house.gov/bean

February 15, 2008

Ms. Phillis Johnson-Ball
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20423

**RE: Environmental Filing: Finance Docket No. 35087, Canadian National Railway
Company and Grand Trunk Corporation – Control – EJ&E West Company**

Dear Ms. Johnson-Ball:

As the United States Representative for Illinois' Eighth Congressional District, I represent several communities along the Elgin, Joliet & Eastern (EJ&E) railroad that will be adversely impacted by an increase of freight traffic proposed by Canadian National (CN) as part of its acquisition proposal. Therefore, I want to take an opportunity to reiterate my concerns and those raised by the several thousand of my constituents who have participated in the scoping process. I request that the Surface Transportation Board (STB) expand the scope of the environmental impact statement (EIS) to evaluate the impact this acquisition will have on the following:

I am concerned that increased freight traffic could have an economic, environmental and quality of life impact on my constituents. I have heard from local elected officials and business leaders—from communities both along and away from the tracks—who are very concerned about the impact additional freight traffic will have at grade crossings from Hoffman Estates through the Barrington area, Lake Zurich, Hawthorn Woods, Gilmer, and Mundelein. Increased freight traffic will cause significant delays to already congested arterial roads such as Illinois Route 59, U.S. Route 14, Illinois Route 22 and Lake Cook Road, which will have broad transportation ramifications through the four-county region (Cook, Kane, Lake, and McHenry).

I have spoken with community first-responders who raised concerns that increased freight traffic would delay police, fire, and EMS departments from being able to adequately respond to all types of emergencies. Doctors, nurses and other medical professionals from Advocate Good Shepherd Hospital—which is the sole emergency medical facility for many communities in northwestern Cook, southwestern Lake, and southeastern McHenry counties—warned that increased freight traffic could be the matter of life or death for people delayed from getting to the hospital.

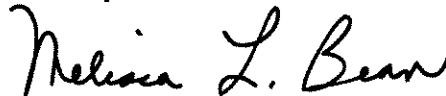
Environmental and hazardous material experts have raised alert about the potential danger of transporting toxic chemicals through our communities. In several instances, the EJ&E railroad tracks are within a few blocks of schools. Just last month, a freight train derailed on Union Pacific tracks just outside my congressional district, leading to the release of hazardous material. Fortunately, the accident did not result in any injuries. However, if such an accident were to happen in the many communities along the EJ&E tracks, the threat of danger would be high. In addition, not only will additional freight traffic increase local pollution from the trains themselves, but will lead to increased pollution from cars idling throughout the day when a town is shut down by a freight train crossing.

Furthermore, the proposed acquisition could jeopardize the proposed STAR Line, which would be Metra's first suburb-to-suburb line. The 55-mile route would utilize a corridor running approximately 36 miles along the EJ&E railroad. The increased freight along this track would likely require Metra to build additional track to operate commuter trains. The STB should require an analysis of the increased costs to the STAR Line as part of any environmental analysis.

Finally, for constituents of mine who are trying to sell their homes or refinance into a more secure mortgage loan, increased freight traffic will only exacerbate an already fragile local housing market. Noise pollution and traffic congestion will deflate home values, and residents who decide to stay will have to upgrade their insulation and windows. During the Barrington scoping meeting, I spoke with a woman who suffered severe cuts when a passing freight train on the EJ&E tracks multiple blocks away vibrated her glass shower door out of its hinges, causing it to shatter in the bathtub. It would be safe to assume that this isolated incident would become more frequent and severe with increased traffic.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of these concerns. I urge the Surface Transportation Board to expand the scope of its environmental analysis to include the sale's impact on the aforementioned issues raised. I look forward to discussing this matter in the future with members of the Surface Transportation Board in Washington and in Illinois during field hearings in and around my district.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Melissa L. Bean". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Melissa" being the most prominent part.

Melissa L. Bean
Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable Charles Nottingham, STB Chairman
The Honorable Francis P. Mulvey, STB Vice Chairman
The Honorable Douglas Buttrey, STB Board Member
Ms. Victoria Rutson, STB Chief of the Section of Environmental Analysis