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082508 Public Meeting.txt

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SCOPING MEETING FOR THE PROPOSED CANADIAN

3

NATIONAL RAILWAY COMPANY ACQUISITION OF THE

4

ELGIN, JOLIET AND EASTERN RAILWAY COMPANY

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7

PUBLIC HEARING

8

AUGUST 25, 2008

9

6:00 P.M.

10 Conducted by:

11 Tina Marie Adams, Meeting Facilitator - MWW Group
Public Relations

12

13 Victoria Rutson, Section Chief - Surface
Transportation Board, Section of Environmental
Analysis

14

John Morton, Project Manager - HDR Engineering

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HOLIDAY INN

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500 HOLIDAY PLAZA DRIVE

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MATTESON, ILLINOIS

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1 Reported by: Rachel F. Gard, 084-003324
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2 MS. ADAMS: We're going to go
3 ahead and get started.
4 I'm sorry? Did I hear
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5 something from the crowd? Everyone
6 can hear okay? You can hear okay in
7 the back? Okay.

8 Good evening, ladies and
9 gentlemen. Thank you for attending
10 tonight's meeting. We are here tonight to
11 hear your comments on the Draft
12 Environmental Impact Statement that was
13 released on July 25th regarding Canadian
14 National Railway's proposed acquisition of
15 the E&E Railroad.

16 My name is Tina Marie Adams, and
17 I work for a firm called MWW Group Public
18 Relations. We are part of a third-party
19 contracting team that supports the Surface
20 Transportation Board and its Section of
21 Environmental Analysis. I will be
22 facilitating the meeting tonight.

23 Before we get started, I'd like
24 to take this opportunity to review some of

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1 the protocol for tonight's meeting. In a
2 moment I will introduce those presiding
3 over the meeting, and there will be a short
4 presentation on the findings from the Draft
5 Environmental Impact Statement.

6 Immediately following this, we
7 will hear your comments. Each commenter

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8 will be given up to 3 minutes to speak. A
9 time clock will be displayed on this screen
10 to my right, and a yellow card will be
11 shown at 2 minutes 30 seconds, with a red
12 card at 3 minutes.

13 A list of speakers will also be
14 displayed on the screen here to my right.
15 I will also call forward the next two
16 speakers in line after that person so we
17 can be as efficient as possible tonight.

18 There's one microphone set up
19 here in the center aisle. There are still
20 some speaking spots available tonight, so
21 if you're interested in speaking, you can
22 still proceed to the registration table
23 that's in the open house area or see a
24 staff member who can assist you.

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1 Alternatively, we want to remind
2 you that you can submit your comments to
3 the Surface Transportation Board through 1)
4 a toll-free number, 2) website, 3) the
5 mailing address, all of which are in the
6 program that you received tonight, or you
7 can get an extra copy, again, in the open
8 house area.

9 There are also comment forms and
10 drop boxes located in the open house area

11 and court reporters located throughout the
12 venue. You may record your comments with
13 them throughout the meeting.

14 Please recognize that all
15 methods of comment received by
16 September 30th will be taken into
17 consideration and weighed equally.

18 Also, a quick housekeeping note.
19 I just want to note that there are three
20 exits here to my right, as well as three
21 exits to my left.

22 Tonight we are here to listen to
23 your comments on the Draft EIS. This is
24 not a question-and-answer session. The

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1 meeting will conclude at 9:00 p.m., with an
2 announcement at 8:30 noting that we have
3 30 minutes that remain.

4 we appreciate your courtesy as
5 we work to create an environment where
6 everyone can be heard tonight.

7 In the event that anyone is in
8 need of a Spanish translator, Beatriz is
9 here tonight to assist.

10 If you have any questions, we
11 have a number of staff available to assist
12 you. Staff are identified with their name
13 tags, as you see on me, and are located

14 throughout the venue.

15 In addition, our open house will
16 remain open during the evening where
17 additional court reporters are available
18 for those of you wishing to provide
19 comments in a more private setting.

20 At this time I'd now like to
21 introduce the people with me on the stage.
22 Victoria Rutson, who is chief of the
23 Section of Environmental Analysis for the
24 Surface Transportation Board, and John

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1 Morton, the project manager from HDR
2 Engineering, who is a third-party
3 consultant supporting the Surface
4 Transportation Board's Section of
5 Environmental Analysis.

6 Victoria Rutson will now make
7 some remarks about the Draft EIS.

8 MS. RUTSON: Thank you, Tina Marie.

9 Can everyone hear me?

10 AUDIENCE MEMBERS: Yes.

11 MS. RUTSON: Good evening, and thank
12 you so much for coming here tonight. As
13 Tina Marie told you, my name is Vicki
14 Rutson. I'm with the Surface
15 Transportation Board's Section of
16 Environmental Analysis. We're here tonight

17 to hear your comments.

18 We know that this proposed
19 acquisition has generated many questions in
20 the Chicagoland area, and we know that
21 Matteson in particular is going through a
22 period of loss and mourning. We are
23 particularly glad then that we have such a
24 good showing tonight. We're looking

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1 forward to hearing your neighbors' comments
2 and your opportunity to have your voice
3 heard.

4 As Tina Marie said, there are
5 many ways to submit public comments.
6 You're more than welcome to speak tonight.
7 If you don't feel comfortable speaking in
8 public, you can submit a comment in
9 writing, you can submit an electronic
10 comment on the board's website, and you can
11 call our toll-free environmental hotline
12 number and leave a recorded comment
13 message.

14 All the instructions on how to
15 follow those various methods of submitting
16 comments are in the booklet that you picked
17 up when you came to the meeting tonight.

18 Comments are due September 30th.
19 If you're writing a letter, it means that

20 it must be postmarked by September 30th.
21 Otherwise, a recorded message or an
22 e-filing must be received on
23 September 30th.
24 Once we get all the comments,

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1 the team will be busy preparing what's
2 called a Final Environmental Impact
3 Statement. That document will review the
4 comments, will consider them, and will
5 respond to them. It will also contain our
6 recommendations to the decision-maker in
7 this proceeding.
8 The decision-maker is the
9 Surface Transportation Board, a
10 three-member board in Washington, D.C. The
11 three gentlemen who comprise the board will
12 be making the decision on this transaction,
13 but only after the full record is closed,
14 which means all your comments, our
15 responses, any additional environmental
16 analysis that we must do, and, very
17 importantly, our recommended environmental
18 mitigation.
19 The board is an independent
20 federal agency located in Washington, D.C.
21 It's neither a proponent or an opponent of
22 this proposal. It is a neutral

23 adjudicatory decision-making agency.

24 My job is to make sure that the

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1 Surface Transportation Board complies with
2 the National Environmental Policy Act, and
3 the Act is actually rather simple. It says
4 that before an agency makes a decision, it
5 must take a hard look at the environmental
6 impacts of that decision. That's the first
7 tenet of NEPA.

8 The second is that there must be
9 an opportunity for public involvement. And
10 that's why we're so pleased to have a good
11 turnout tonight, and we look forward to
12 your comments in whatever medium you choose
13 to submit them.

14 Every comment will be treated
15 equally, whether you give it orally through
16 the hotline, by a letter or an e-filing, or
17 speak privately to a court reporter this
18 evening. Every comment will be treated
19 equally.

20 The next step in the process, as
21 I said, is the issuance of the Final
22 Environmental Impact Statement. The board
23 has said that that document will come out
24 sometime between December 1st and

1 January 31st.

2 After, and only after, that
3 Final EIS is issued will there be a final
4 decision on this proposal, and that
5 decision will either be to approve the
6 transaction, to deny the transaction, or to
7 approve the transaction but only with the
8 imposition of environmental and other
9 mitigating conditions. Those are the three
10 choices that the board has.

11 with that, I'd like to turn the
12 microphone over to John Morton, who is
13 going to give you a summary of the findings
14 in the Draft EIS.

15 John?

16 MR. MORTON: Thank you, Vicki.

17 I'd like to kind of briefly go
18 through the -- some of the findings in the
19 Draft EIS. First, discuss a little bit
20 about the applicant. CN is a Class I
21 railroad with operations --

22 I'm sorry. Is there a question?

23 AUDIENCE MEMBER: No.

24 MR. BRYANT: Oh, okay.

1 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Someone trying to
2 find where I am.

3 MR. MORTON: Oh. She's up here in
4 front.

5 (Continuing) -- with operations
6 in Canada and United States. Canadian
7 National has five rail lines that converge
8 in the Chicago area. You can see the five
9 dark lines are the rail lines that converge
10 in the Chicago area, and they operate about
11 150 miles of rail lines in Chicago.

12 EJ&E is a regional railroad that
13 operates in an arc around Chicago. It
14 starts up at Waukegan, comes around to
15 Joliet and across to Griffith and then up
16 to Gary. It's about -- has about 200 miles
17 of rail line, and it's got three major
18 yards, including a major classification
19 yard in Gary, Indiana: The Kirk Yard.

20 As Vicki mentioned, the
21 applicants have identified three primary
22 purposes for acquiring the EJ&E. First is
23 to increase Canadian National's flexibility
24 in routing by getting a route around the

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1 city. It's to make EJ&E's Kirk Yard
2 available to the Canadian National. And

3 it's to allow the CN to develop a more
4 extensive relationship with the shippers on
5 the EJ&E.

6 There are several things that
7 the transaction -- what happened, there are
8 some changes in rail operations and yard
9 operations I'll talk about in a minute.
10 There's also -- CN proposes six new
11 connections. They're listed up here. We
12 have a chart back in the open house section
13 if you wanted to look at those six
14 connections. And there's -- they're
15 proposing 19 miles of siding extensions and
16 double tracking.

17 The Draft EIS included --

18 Yes, please.

19 AUDIENCE MEMBER: What is meant by a
20 siding extension?

21 MR. MORTON: It's essentially
22 putting in a second track where there is
23 one track now. In some cases we identified
24 it as extending where they have a siding,

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1 just running -- extending that siding, that
2 second track. In some cases it's a double
3 track or actually adding a second main
4 line.

5 The EIS identified a number of

6 resource areas and talks about the issues
7 in each one of those resource areas, and I
8 want to cover just a few tonight.

9 Rail operations. This is a
10 density diagram, and hopefully folks in the
11 room can see it. But generally, this is
12 the EJ&E arc on the outside, and these are
13 the CN rail lines coming down the inside.
14 The light blue color is the current train
15 track, again, in terms of number of trains
16 per day. The darker color is the proposed
17 train numbers in terms of trains per day
18 should the transaction be approved.

19 And as you can see, what --
20 there's fair -- most of the tracking that
21 would be coming down today would be
22 diverted and come around the EJ&E arc, and
23 so you can see the shift in traffic levels.

24 The EIS looked at the operations

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1 and had concluded that essentially the EJ&E
2 would be near or at its capacity, its
3 practical train volume capacity, in a
4 number of areas. As a result of that, the
5 EIS concluded that it would be unlikely
6 that the number of trains identified in
7 CN's operating plan would be exceeded or be
8 higher.

9 It also identified that in

10 certain areas where Metra crosses the EJ&E
11 that in order to maintain the high on-time
12 performance of Metra that CN and Metra
13 would need to work together.

14 In the safety, because of the
15 increased number of train miles, the
16 probability of a train accident on the EJ&E
17 arc would likely increase. You know, by
18 the same token, because of the reduced
19 number of train miles, the probability of a
20 train accident on the CN rail line inside
21 the EJ&E arc would likely decrease.

22 AUDIENCE MEMBER: For how long?

23 MR. MORTON: The potential for a
24 highway-rail accident on the EJ&E rail line

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1 would also likely increase, and
2 consequently, because of the reduction, the
3 potential for a highway-rail accident on
4 the CN rail line would likely decrease.

5 Woodruff Road in Joliet and Lake
6 and Miller Street in Griffith, Indiana, the
7 EIS identified those as experiencing a
8 substantial increase in the potential for
9 an accident. The EIS concluded that there
10 really wouldn't no -- be no impact on
11 passenger safety because passenger rail

12 doesn't operate on the EJ&E rail line, but
13 you would have an improvement on the CN
14 rail lines because of the reduction in the
15 freight traffic.

16 In addition, because of the
17 change in freight operations, there would
18 be a -- a number -- more hazardous
19 materials transported on the EJ&E route,
20 and many of the segments along the EJ&E
21 rail line would be major key routes, or
22 that would be more than 20,000 carloads of
23 hazardous material transported on them per
24 year.

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1 we evaluated 155 highway-rail
2 at-grade crossings on the Canadian National
3 rail lines within the arc. 125 of those
4 would benefit from the proposed action.

5 of the 112 highway-rail at-grade
6 crossings on the EJ&E, 87 of them did meet
7 the board's threshold for environmental
8 analysis. On that -- of that analysis,
9 existing congestion within the EJ&E
10 corridor makes -- we had some mitigation
11 suggestions in the EIS.

12 without mitigation, there are 15
13 highway-rail at-grade crossings that we've
14 identified, and they're listed up there,

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15 and they're on the board out in the
16 public -- or in the open house session that
17 would be substantially affected by the
18 proposed action.

19 From an air quality standpoint,
20 because of the longer train route, the
21 emissions would increase. But because of
22 the more efficient route and the less
23 delay, the result is that the increase in
24 emissions would be below the de minimis

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1 thresholds for general conformity in this
2 area.
3 we looked at all the emergency
4 services providers -- the police, the
5 hospitals, and the fire stations -- and
6 identified that there are eleven, nine fire
7 and two hospitals that are located near the
8 EJ&E that would potentially experience
9 effects without mitigation.
10 We identified in the Draft EIS
11 about 3,000 noise-sensitive receptors.
12 Those are homes and businesses and
13 facilities that are sensitive to noise that
14 would be within the 65 dBA. That's a
15 measurement of noise along the EJ&E. There
16 would be about 2,700 receptors that would
17 actually benefit on the CN rail line

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18 segments from the reduced traffic.

19 Because of the safety
20 requirements, the quiet zone in Barrington
21 would actually no longer qualify as a quiet
22 zone without mitigation.

23 There were a number of
24 mitigation measures listed in the Draft

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1 EIS. Canadian National has 76 voluntary
2 mitigation measures in these areas. In
3 addition to those 76, CN is proposing 72
4 mitigation measures in those areas. And
5 those are all listed in both the Executive
6 Summary and also in the Draft EIS.

7 And with that, I'd like to turn
8 it back over to Tina Marie for the
9 comments.

10 MS. ADAMS: I'd actually like to
11 start by acknowledging that there were a
12 couple questions folks had during John's
13 presentation. I would invite you to go to
14 the open house portion where there are
15 still engineering staff that are there to
16 answer your question because we want to
17 reserve this time for people to make their
18 public comments. So thank you for that.

19 AUDIENCE MEMBER: One question. Why
20 is this all being based on the environment

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and nothing else?

MS. ADAMS: Again, I would invite
you to go to the open house portion, and
that's where we're going to address

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questions that people have. During this
period, this is strictly the public comment
period.

But, again, there are staff back
there, and if you are someone who is
commenting, before or after you comment,
again, please feel free to move to the open
house area to have questions answered.

Okay. With that, we will begin
the public comment portion of our meeting.
I want to remind you that we're going to
adhere to that 3-minute rule. And we want
to also get our first commenters up and
ready here.

I understand Rick Bryant,
representing Congressman Jesse Jackson's
office, is here first up to speak at the
microphone -- there you are. Okay -- and
then followed by Judith Bird and Michael
Lazich.

As people are making their way
to the microphone, I just want to remind
you if you could please state your name,

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24 who you represent or the town that you're

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1 from. And if you could also please spell
2 your last name for the benefit of the court
3 reporter, who will be taking down all the
4 comments made here today.

5 We have the microphone here at
6 the center aisle.

7 MR. BRYANT: Oh, okay.

8 Hi, my name is Rick Bryant. I'm
9 the District Administrator for Congressman
10 Jesse Jackson, Jr. The Congressman's
11 district, for those of you who don't know,
12 starts at the Museum of Science and
13 Industry, comes down the lakefront all the
14 way down the Indiana line to the Cook
15 County border, across over to University
16 Park, and then kind of back up I-57, so
17 it's a large district.

18 This issue that brings us here
19 today is a complicated and perplexing one
20 for Congressman Jackson. That's because
21 one-third of his district, the northern
22 part that I just described, strongly favors
23 this transaction because it will
24 significantly reduce train traffic for

1 them.

2 Another third of the district,
3 the southern third, strongly opposes this
4 transaction because it will significantly
5 increase train traffic in their
6 communities.

7 And the middle third of the
8 district will see little impact from the
9 proposed transaction and, therefore, they
10 remain largely ambivalent to the issue.

11 And then, finally, there's
12 Homewood, the U.S. corporate headquarters
13 for Canadian National Railway, which, as
14 you know, was formerly the Illinois Central
15 Railroad. Homewood favors the sale because
16 local officials there fear that without
17 this transaction, Canadian National will
18 move a significant number of its current
19 and future freight operations and its local
20 jobs from the Chicago area to Memphis,
21 Tennessee.

22 So where does the Congressman
23 stand? He supports the sale, but his
24 support is conditional. He has asked the

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2 writing, to ensure that the terms of the
3 sale include specific mitigation
4 requirements in the communities between
5 Matteson and the Indiana state line.

6 That mitigation includes
7 underpasses or overpasses at the four
8 locations identified in the charts out
9 here, which is Cicero Avenue in Matteson,
10 Western Avenue in Park Forest, Chicago Road
11 in Chicago Heights, and Lincoln Highway in
12 Lynwood.

13 These viaducts will guarantee
14 uninterrupted north-south automobile
15 traffic flow on these major thoroughfares,
16 and these viaducts will also prevent
17 potential problems for local emergency
18 vehicles who need around-the-clock access
19 between local communities and the St. James
20 Hospitals in Chicago Heights and Olympia
21 Fields.

22 There's one other condition that
23 the Congressman is demanding. Not only
24 must the STB require these underpasses, but

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1 the STB must be responsible for identifying
2 funding for them as well. Funding should
3 not come from -- and the funding should
4 come from a combination of sources,

5 including CN, the federal government,
6 and/or the state government.

7 As the Congressman stated in his
8 letters to the Surface Transportation
9 Board, the local communities cannot afford
10 the underpasses, and they should not be
11 required to pay for those.

12 Eleven Chicagoland
13 communities -- the eleven communities
14 identified in the study that need
15 mitigation, of those eleven, Chicago
16 Heights has the lowest annual household
17 income, Park Forest has the third lowest,
18 and Lynwood and Matteson are also below the
19 average.

20 In closing, the Congressman
21 wrote that he believes that the acquisition
22 of EJ&E Railroad by Canadian National will
23 greatly improve overall rail service and
24 efficiencies throughout the Chicago area,

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1 as well as reduce overall rail congestion.

2 However, he emphasized that
3 those overall regional railroad benefits
4 should not outweigh or override the
5 specific local negative impacts of
6 rerouting trains that will certainly create
7 headaches in other communities.

8 "In the end," Jackson has told
9 the board, "I am counting on the board to
10 work with me and all interested parties to
11 appropriately find funding for these
12 highlighted mitigation projects."

13 Thank you very much.

14 MS. ADAMS: Okay. We have Judith
15 Bird --

16 MR. BRYANT: We also have copies of
17 the letters the Congressman has sent to STB
18 and the statement over on the side table.

19 MS. ADAMS: We have Judith Bird
20 speaking next -- again, I would remind you
21 if you could please say your full name and
22 spell that, your last name, who you
23 represent or the town that you're from --
24 followed by Michael Lazich and Julian

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1 Alexander.

2 MS. BIRD: My name is Judith Bird,
3 J-U-D-I-T-H, B-I-R-D. I'm a resident of
4 Frankfort, Illinois. I felt that the --
5 the Draft EIS study seems to be based on
6 traffic projections only up to the year
7 2015, and that's only seven years away.

8 The Northwestern Planning
9 Commission estimates then Frankfort's
10 population will be up to 55,000 by the year
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11 2030. This study should be based on much
12 higher population numbers; otherwise, the
13 study is flawed from the beginning.

14 The Draft EIS is based on the
15 belief that trains will travel at 45 miles
16 per hour through Frankfort; thus, the wait
17 times around grade crossings will be very
18 short. My own personal observation just
19 simply being stuck at trains periodically
20 is that trains are not running that fast.
21 15 to 20 miles per hour is a more realistic
22 estimate.

23 The EIS authors must look at the
24 reality of the train speeds and consider

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1 the impact of blocked intersections in our
2 communities.

3 If you've ever waited for an
4 ambulance for any reason, a minute can seem
5 like an hour. Should your home be on the
6 wrong side of the tracks anywhere within
7 this whole area, the times will increase
8 enormously, and it's simply not -- I don't
9 feel the DEIS adequately addresses this
10 type of issue.

11 Part of the requirements for
12 this purchase absolutely must include a
13 requirement for CN to fund additional fire

14 stations, as well as provide HAZMAT
15 training and equipment to our local
16 communities.

17 Thank you.

18 MS. ADAMS: Thank you.

19 We have Michael Lazich and
20 Julian Alexander and Mayor Jim Holland
21 following that.

22 MR. LAZICH: My name is Michael C.
23 Lazich, L-A-Z-I-C-H. I live in Frankfort,
24 Illinois, in the Sandalwood Estates. I

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1 live at 11560 Tea Tree Lane. It's a
2 four-block area, runs parallel to the
3 railroad tracks. The homes are in the
4 range from 400,000 to \$600,000 homes.

5 I would question that 65 decibel
6 because I can go out on my patio, and some
7 of the trains -- not all of them -- and I
8 can literally watch my windows vibrate. So
9 I would question that 65 decibel number.

10 Now, my neighbors -- I've lived
11 there four years. It's a brand-new home,
12 bought it in '04. My neighbors, who -- on
13 each side, east and west, because the --
14 runs east and west. Neighbors on both
15 sides are moving, and the one across the
16 street, strictly because of CN Railroad

17 moving in. They understand the impact of
18 running all these trains through our
19 neighborhood, the impact it's going to have
20 on the neighborhood.

21 And another question I have is
22 the hazardous waste, especially chlorine
23 gas. Now they're running coal cars through
24 there and tankers with chlorine gas. It's

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1 very deadly.

2 If it should overturn like they
3 had a deadly accident in Tennessee, not
4 only my four-block area, but literally for
5 miles the chlorine gas could seep through
6 the neighborhoods and everything and be
7 very deadly to the neighborhood.

8 And these are just some of my
9 concerns. Thank you.

10 MR. ADAMS: Julian Alexander
11 followed by Mayor Holland and Mike

12 MR. ALEXANDER: My name is Julian
13 Alexander A-L-E-X-A-N-D-E-R. I'm president
14 of the Meadow Lakes Homeowner's
15 Association, which our subdivision sits
16 directly adjacent to the tracks.

17 we look at this as a major
18 impact on our community. Pollution would
19 increase from 28 to 38 trains, there is

20 more pollution. So I disagree with your
21 numbers there.

22 Hazmat. We have no hazmat teams
23 in our community, nor had our fire
24 department ever been trained for any type

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1 of emergency like this, nor do they have
2 response vehicles like that.

3 The traffic increase of train
4 traffic on those tracks. The more trains
5 we all know, the more accidents. You can't
6 tell me that you put one train on a track,
7 you have less accidents. If you put 30 on
8 a track, you are going to have more
9 accidents.

10 The noise pollution. We live
11 there now, you have four, five trains
12 coming through there, all times of night
13 and just as the gentleman before me, we can
14 literally see our windows shake.

15 Our schools and hospitals. We
16 happen to be on that list of one of the
17 eleven hospitals. If there's an emergency
18 in our community, once we leave our
19 community, we use Cicero Avenue. If
20 there's no under or overpass there, we are
21 stuck. We cannot use Governor's Highway
22 all the time because it floods. We cannot

23 go to I-57.

24 Life and death here. Stroke,

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1 heart attack victim. We are talking
2 seconds, not minutes.

3 The value of our homes would
4 definitely decrease. The safety on the
5 tracks as far as kids playing on those
6 tracks without a berm, I think is just
7 terrible to put our kids in jeopardy like
8 this.

9 Our health issues. The health
10 issues of pollution from the tracks is
11 definitely a major concern and we all know
12 that the trains do put out a lot more
13 pollution than a car.

14 The over and underpass. We have
15 not heard of the railroad talking about
16 that in any form or fashion or saying
17 anything like that. They have not given us
18 the respect to even talk that way although
19 they are saying what their trains could do.

20 We know that these trains go up
21 and down these tracks and the freight
22 trains could be there for hours. We have
23 seen them coming and going in both
24 directions and we think that's a major

1 concern.

2 Also, the last thing, the
3 pollution part of it. We are definitely
4 concerned about that. As far as trains
5 sitting there with engines just idling,
6 winter or summer, we are definitely
7 concerned about that. Thank you.

8 MS. ADAMS: Mayor Holland, Mike
9 Stevens and Mike Mohan.

10 MR. HIGGINS: Vicki, we certainly
11 compliment you on your well-organized
12 event.

13 My name is Jim Holland
14 H-O-L-L-A-N-D. I am the Mayor of the
15 Village of Frankfort and the Village of
16 Frankfort will make a comment in writing
17 later and after our engineers have a chance
18 to review the environmental impact
19 statement that's been drafted.

20 Tonight I'm going to make some
21 comments about four concerns that I have
22 personally found in the draft environmental
23 impact statement. The environmental impact
24 statement needs to take a hard look at

1 suggestions from organizations such as
2 CREATE that have made proposals to
3 alleviate rail congestion in Chicago.

4 These suggestions would benefit
5 all railroads in Chicago, not just the CN.
6 The draft environmental impact statement
7 needs
8 to -- seems to just dismiss the CREATE
9 suggestions. The final EIS should
10 seriously consider CREATE alternatives.

11 The draft EIS suggests the CN
12 should pay only a portion of the cost of
13 mitigation for such items as grade
14 separations. The draft EIS suggests that
15 government should pay the rest. Key
16 Illinois state agencies, IDOT and the ICC
17 have stated that they do not have funds for
18 grade separations and other mitigation.

19 The draft EIS fails to take a
20 hard look at the likelihood that the
21 Federal, state and local governments can or
22 will fund those costs. CN's profit will
23 benefit from this transaction. They should
24 pay for all mitigation required.

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1 The final EIS should identify
2 this realistic source for funding

3 mitigation even if it is precedent setting.

4 The draft EIS states that bicycle and
5 pedestrian safety will be addressed after
6 the publication of the EIS. These issues
7 need to be addressed in the EIS.

8 Bicycle and pedestrian trails
9 are very important to residents of
10 Frankfort. Several bicycle trails already
11 cross the tracks in Frankfort and our plans
12 call for them at nearly every rail highway
13 intersection.

14 The EIS needs to take a hard
15 look at bicycle and pedestrian crossings
16 and the EIS should order the CN to provide
17 proper crossings for bicycles and
18 pedestrians where local plans show them.

19 Appendix L suggests that there
20 will be a significant sound impact to the
21 people of Frankfort. The EIS should
22 require the CN to pay for the four-way
23 gates and other improvements necessary to
24 qualify Frankfort six at-grade crossings

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1 for a long-term Federal Railroad
2 Administration approved quiet zone.

3 In addition, the EIS should
4 direct CN to pay the cost for berms and
5 landscaping and other mitigation items to

6 help mitigate sound in residential areas in
7 Frankfort.

8 We certainly thank you for the
9 opportunity to speak tonight.

10 MS. ADAMS: Mike Stevens, Mike Mohan
11 and Joe Sweiderman.

12 MR. HIGGINS: Good evening. My name
13 is Mike Stevens S-T-E-V-E-N-S. I live in
14 Frankfort and I'm also a village trustee in
15 Frankfort and I wish I didn't have to
16 follow Mayor Holland.

17 I'm opposed to the sale and
18 there are a number of reasons why. First
19 of all, is the increase in train traffic
20 from six to 28 a day. I don't know how
21 anyone can say that's a good thing for
22 Frankfort.

23 This will negatively impact our
24 fire and police emergency response time. I

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1 read over the weekend an article in the
2 paper where Mayor Balderman in New Lenox
3 talked about a situation where he was a
4 policeman there and got caught in a
5 situation where the ambulance couldn't get
6 across the track and a young child lost its
7 life. And we don't want that to happen
8 anywhere.

9 I'm concerned about the school
10 buses that they have to cross the tracks a
11 number of times a day. And we've got a
12 situation at 116th Avenue where we don't
13 even have crossing gates coming down. They
14 are not even there.

15 I believe that what we are doing
16 is moving a regional transportation problem
17 further west and we are not addressing this
18 problem as it exists.

19 People who currently live in the
20 area today where the trains are running
21 have dealt with this issue for many years.
22 Their property values reflect already the
23 high volume of train traffic.

24 who is going to pay our

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1 homeowners because of their home values
2 being reduced because of these trains
3 coming through?

4 The cost of mitigation. The
5 cost is staggering yet the CN only proposes
6 to contribute 40 million dollars. This
7 from a company that made over 2 billion
8 dollars in profit last year.

9 The CN is a foreign company
10 expecting the US taxpayers to foot the bill
11 so that they can become more profitable.

12 This sale if it goes through will be a huge
13 win for CN and a huge loss for the American
14 taxpayer.

15 And my town, my town of
16 Frankfort will be a less desirable place to
17 live. Thank you so much.

18 MS. ADAMS: Mike Mohan and then we
19 have Joe Sweiderman and Terry LaPlasta.

20 MR. HIGGINS: My name is Michael
21 Mohan M-O-H-A-N and I am CN's Vice
22 President of Service. Thank you for the
23 opportunity to speak this evening about
24 CN's goals in this transaction and our

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1 commitment to the environmental review
2 process in this proceeding.

3 CN is the fifth largest railroad
4 in North America, measured in terms of
5 revenues, and we work closely with all our
6 rail colleagues as part of an integrated
7 network.

8 In addition to our
9 transcontinental operations across Canada,
10 we operate in sixteen states in the United
11 States. CN has a particularly strong
12 heritage in Illinois.

13 A key portion of our US network
14 is the former Illinois Central Railroad,

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15 which CN acquired in 1999, and which has
16 operated for more than 150 years. In
17 addition, CN's US headquarters is located
18 in Homewood, Illinois and we are proud to
19 have more that 1500 employees located in
20 this state.

21 CN prides itself on running a
22 precision railroad. Our President and
23 Chief Executive Officer, Hunter Harrison,
24 pioneered the concept, which enables CN to

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1 conduct safe and efficient operations while
2 providing the best possible service to our
3 customers.

4 Our proposed acquisition of the
5 major portion of the Elgin, Joliet &
6 Eastern Railway Company is intended to help
7 address the severe rail congestion plaguing
8 the Chicago region. This transaction would
9 enable CN to divert most of our trains that
10 currently operate through downtown Chicago
11 onto the underutilized EJ&E line on the
12 periphery of the city.

13 By doing so, this transaction
14 would streamline CN's operations while also
15 providing a privately funded partial remedy
16 to the costly and inefficient rail
17 congestion in Chicago. Importantly,

18 roughly 60 communities inside the EJ&E also
19 would benefit from reduced train traffic as
20 a result of the transaction.

21 CN understands the concerns about
22 increased train traffic that have been
23 raised by communities along the EJ&E line.
24 We have been engaged on environmental

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1 issues in two major areas.

2 First, CN has been an active
3 participant in the Section of Environmental
4 Analysis environment review process and CN
5 has done everything possible to help
6 facilitate this process.

7 CN has provided all of the data
8 requested by SEA and its consultants for
9 their analysis and we participated in the
10 SEA's scoping meetings conducted earlier
11 this year by being available at each
12 meeting to talk with community residents
13 and officials and respond to their
14 questions.

15 In addition, consistent with STB
16 practice under which the applicants in a
17 transaction are responsible for reimbursing
18 the charges incurred by the third-party
19 consultants assisting SEA in the
20 environmental review process, under SEA's

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21 direction, CN has already paid the
22 independent environment consultants who are
23 assisting SEA more that \$10.5 million, and
24 we expect to pay at \$7.5 million more

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1 through the end of this year.

2 In addition, we have hired our
3 own in dependent environmental consultants
4 who have conducted extensive environmental
5 analyses in order to both answer SEA's
6 factual inquiries and to develop mitigation
7 plans. Our consultants were also
8 instrumental in developing CN's proposed
9 voluntary mitigation options, which were
10 included in the Draft Environmental Impact
11 Statement issued on July 25 by SEA.

12 Second, CN has undertaken an
13 extensive community outreach effort,
14 starting first with briefings on the
15 transaction with individual community
16 leaders, civic organizations, and other
17 groups when we announced this transaction.

18 At the conclusion of SEA's
19 scoping meetings, CN launched an extensive
20 community outreach initiative with the goal
21 of developing voluntary mitigation
22 agreements with communities located along
23 the EJ&E lines to address their concerns

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24 about the impact of increased train traffic

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1 along the line.

2 My colleague, Eric Jakubowski
3 and I have met with every community located
4 along the EJ&E line willing to meet with
5 us, including Matteson. We have been
6 successful in reaching an agreement with
7 the City of Joliet that addresses their
8 environment concerns, and we have
9 productive discussions ongoing with a
10 number of other communities. CN is fully
11 committed to these mitigation efforts.

12 I know there has been interest
13 and concerns expressed about CN's august 14
14 filing in which we asked the Board to
15 divide this proceeding so that the
16 transaction can close on the transportation
17 merits before the end of 2008.

18 The need for our filing arose
19 because the board's July 25, 2008 decision
20 projected a timetable for a final decision
21 in this proceeding that likely extends into
22 2009, but with no certain end date.

23 At the same time, the Stock
24 Purchase Agreement between CN and EJ&E, an

1 indicted subsidiary of United States Steel
2 Corporation presents the risk that EJ&E
3 could terminate the transaction if it were
4 not approved by the STB and closed by
5 December 31, 2008.

6 CN contacted US steel and
7 requested modification of the SPA or other
8 action that would assure that the
9 transaction could still be closed if
10 approved after December 31, 2008. Earlier
11 this month, however, US Steel declined our
12 request. Facing the very real prospect
13 that we would not be able to close on the
14 transaction by year-end, we filed our
15 August 14 petition.

16 There is no dispute about the
17 transportation benefits of the transaction
18 and the lack of serious competitive issues.
19 What I want to emphasize this evening is
20 that our petition would not in any way
21 change SEA's environmental review process.
22 The environmental review process would
23 continue as outlined in the Board's July 25
24 decision setting forth time limits in this

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2 of particular importance, during
3 the time between the Board's approval of
4 our transaction and completion of the
5 environmental review process, CN would not
6 be allowed to make any transaction-related
7 operational changes that would create
8 adverse impacts on communities located
9 along the EJ&E line.

10 We fully understand the need for
11 a thorough environmental review and we are
12 not seeking to deprive any community or
13 interested part of its opportunity to
14 participate in this process.

15 Thank you again for the
16 opportunity to provide CN's perspective on
17 this transaction.

18 MS. ADAMS: We now have Joe
19 Schwieterman, Terry LaMastas up and Kurt
20 Zollener.

21 MR. SCHWIETERMAN: Good evening, I'm
22 Joe Schwieterman, Professor at DePaul
23 University and Director of the Chatting
24 Institute at DePaul.

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1 MS. ADAMS: Could you state your
2 name, please?

3 MR. SCHWIETERMAN:
4 S-C-H-W-I-E-T-E-R-M-A-N. I'm here speaking
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5 on my personal views and not those of my
6 employer.

7 I appreciated the draft EIS as
8 the region has a lot of trouble making
9 choices on transportation infrastructure
10 from highway expansion to airports to rail,
11 it's been a frustrating ten years. And
12 part of the problem is lack of adequate
13 state support for grade crossing
14 improvement in this case.

15 Part of our failure is to
16 adequately create, thus the rail problems
17 continue to grow worse and communities
18 everywhere are feeling the pinch. I think
19 the draft EIS captures those problems well.

20 On one hand, it shows there are
21 significant transportation benefits to the
22 acquisition. It shows that CN can take
23 steps to mitigate some of the problems but
24 it shows that the problems are indeed very

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1 real.

2 I think the costs do not rise to
3 the level where they offset the benefits of
4 this transaction for the region. And the
5 volume of traffic will grow in this region,
6 making more traffic on the EJ&E inevitable
7 regardless of what occurs but the regional

8 benefits are fairly compelling.

9 I think the assumption on
10 traffic flow are reasonable in the EIS. In
11 the same time, I think some of the numbers
12 on traffic volume for all the lines in the
13 region may indeed change dramatically when
14 you look out ten or fifteen years which may
15 assess the need for additional improvements
16 to insure that train speed remains at the
17 level CAS anticipates.

18 The EJ&E was built of the bypass
19 I think with proper mitigation can be an
20 efficient bypass. I think our region is
21 wise to debate these issues carefully but I
22 think as a region, the benefits are indeed
23 fairly compelling. Thank you.

24 MS. ADAMS: Terry LOMastis, followed

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1 by Kurt Zollener and Jorge Perez.

2 MR. HIGGINS: My name is Terry
3 LOMastis. I'm Vice Chair of Economic
4 Development For Chicago South Chamber of
5 Commerce.

6 This is a vast reach in the
7 south side of Chicago. It represents about
8 86 communities and about 2.5 million
9 residents. we house several national and
10 regional organizations and one of the

11 largest logistics centers in the United
12 States.

13 All work together to coordinate
14 the operations in the south suburbs. The
15 Chicago Chamber of Commerce is a steward of
16 economic vitality for our region and
17 believes that the acquisition will help
18 move freight traffic more effectively and
19 create jobs and open up new economic
20 development opportunities for all.

21 As freight traffic is expected
22 to increase over the coming years and the
23 need to improve and expand our rail system
24 and to accommodate a growing flow of

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1 commercial -- with commerce throughout the
2 region is apparent.

3 That the Canadian National Rail
4 Company whose corporate headquarters are in
5 South Cook County is offering to
6 investigate in our region -- is offering to
7 invest in our region which will result in
8 strengthening our economy.

9 We expect that Canadian National
10 will also work with local communities and
11 governments to help address the need for
12 the infrastructure changes that will occur.

13 We are asking the Surface
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14 Transportation Board to look favorably upon
15 the benefits to be derived from this
16 transaction and to look to minimize any
17 negative impact on communities along the
18 EJ&E by supporting both public and
19 privately long-term funding and issues to
20 provide infrastructure needed to support
21 the necessary changes that will impact our
22 communities.

23 Thank you very much for having
24 us.

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1 MS. ADAMS: Kurt Zoellner followed
2 by Jorge Perez and Representative Al Riley.

3 MR. HIGGINS: Yes. My name is Kurt
4 Zollener Z-O-E-L-L-N-E-R representing the
5 Village of Mokena. I'd like to give a
6 couple comments.

7 First talk about some broad
8 issues and then some more specific. First
9 of all, in our opinion, the final EIS needs
10 to broadly address the thought plane.

11 First review alternatives for
12 relieving rail congestion in the
13 Chicagoland area. Other than CN's proposed
14 shift of huge volumes of rail traffic from
15 existing tracks to the EJ&E.

16 More specifically, we believe
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17 that EIS should reconsider the CREATE
18 alternative as a comprehensive solution to
19 the problem.

20 Secondly, assess realistically
21 the ability of taxpayers to fund the
22 mitigation recommendations contained in the
23 DEIS, as well as other mitigation measures.
24 Citizens throughout the region made demands

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1 should CN's proposal ultimately be
2 approved.

3 We believe the environmental
4 impact of proposed transaction on the
5 regional will be far greater than implied
6 in the DEIS, given the scarcity of federal,
7 state and local government dollars to enact
8 mitigation measures.

9 Finally re-evaluate the list of
10 substantially affected crossings included
11 in the DEIS. The limited time length
12 projection of ATT counts in DEIS on these
13 roads crossing the EJ&E at grade level, in
14 our opinion, fails to adequately consider
15 the probable prospect of both increased
16 vehicular traffic on the roads and
17 increased freight traffic on the EJ&E over
18 the next 20 years given current population
19 growth patterns and every increasing

20 volumes of freight traffic on the rails.
21 On a more specific basis we
22 would ask the STB to do the following and
23 the final EIS. First take a harder look at
24 specific impact of noise on residential

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1 homes located along the EJ&E that might be
2 associated with larger and much more
3 frequent freight traffic.

4 Secondly, require CN to pay for
5 the installation of berms or noise walls in
6 areas which EJ&E trackage lies within the
7 65 d/b/a projected contour line for
8 residential areas as condition of approval
9 for CN's acquisition of the EJ&E.

10 Such noise barriers are
11 necessary to help protect the property
12 values of these residential areas. We
13 believe it is unfair to ask the residents
14 of homes near the EJ&E to simply absorb the
15 negative physical and economic impacts that
16 will be imposed on them if this is
17 ultimately approved.

18 Third, to take a harder look at
19 the negative impacts on safety and traffic
20 congestion at grade crossings that would be
21 associated with a quadrupling of freight
22 traffic on the EJ&E.

23 And finally, require CN to pay
24 for necessary crossing improvements

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1 including grade separations for either quad
2 gates or barrier median test conditions for
3 approval for the acquisition.

4 with specific respect to our
5 community and its crossing of Wolf Road, we
6 will need the installation of barrier
7 medians to be the minimum acceptable
8 crossing improvement. Thank you.

9 MS. ADAMS: Jorge Perez followed by
10 Al Riley and Doug Whitley.

11 MR. PEREZ: Good evening. My name is
12 Jorge Perez and I'm from South Chicago.
13 The representatives of Surface
14 Transportation Board, I'm President of the
15 Calumet Area Industrial Commission, an
16 organization representing businesses and
17 industry on the south side of Chicago and
18 in the southern suburbs.

19 I come before you today to urge
20 the Surface Transportation Board to include
21 the positive economic impact that the
22 Canadian National Railroad's acquisition of
23 the EJ&E Railroad will have in its
24 environmental impact statement.

1 The purchase of the EJ&E by
2 Canadian National holds the promise of
3 economic revitalization for the portion of
4 the EJ&E Railroad that runs to the
5 southeast side of Chicago.

6 The EJ&E Railroad will link the
7 Port of Chicago on the southeast side of
8 Chicago with an international shipping
9 network. Companies can unload their
10 product in the Port of Chicago onto the
11 Canadian National Railroad and ship them
12 transcontinental to West Coast ports and
13 destinations across the globe.

14 This increases the value of the
15 port of Chicago and will lead to further
16 investment in jobs in the shipping
17 industry.

18 In addition to the economic
19 benefits of the south and southeast side of
20 the city and suburban industry, the
21 acquisition will be good for the economy
22 and the Chicago Metropolitan region.

23 Rail congestion slows the
24 transport of goods to and from Chicago

1 businesses, increasing costs to those
2 products. This same congestion adds to
3 shipping costs of businesses across the
4 country as trains passing from the east to
5 the West Coast face delays as they pass
6 through Chicago.

7 If the rail congestion in
8 Chicago is not addressed soon, shippers
9 will find alternative means of shipping
10 resulting in a loss of revenue and jobs for
11 the Chicago region.

12 In closing, the south side and
13 southern suburbs of Chicago need the
14 economic development and jobs that link the
15 EJ&E Railway to the Canadian National,
16 International Shipping network will
17 provide.

18 On behalf of the Calumet Area
19 Board of Directors, I urge the Surface
20 Transportation Board to approve the
21 proposed acquisition of the EJ&E Railway.
22 Thank you.

23 MS. ADAMS: I understand that --
24 please be respectful of everyone. We

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1 appreciate that.

2 I understand that you are

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representing Representative Al Riley.

If you could please state your
name and spell your name.

MS. PERALES: My name is Martha
Perales and I'm here representing State
Representative Al Riley. Last name is
spelled P-E-R-A-L-E-S.

State Representative Riley
represents the 38th District. The 38th
District includes all and or portions of
Country Club Hills, Flossmoor, Harvey,
Hazel Crest, Markham, Matteson, Oak
Forrest, Olympia Fields, Park Forest,
Richton Park and Tinley Park.

I'm here in opposition to the
proposed EJ&E purchase. I don't think that
CN has been neighborly in their whole
approach and that is why I am against the
purchase in its present form. There has
been little discussion from CN to mitigate
the congestion being caused by more and
longer trains.

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This is about mitigating
congestion around the Chicago area. We are
also being viewed as an inter land in this
deal. I don't believe if CN really
listened to the critical mass of the

6 residents, the counsel of governments and
7 municipalities in the metropolitan area.

8 The whole issue of congestion
9 and mitigation and prospective of these
10 long trains and its impact our or region
11 has not been fully addressed at this time.
12 If CN believes this this is a good deal for
13 the Chicago area, then additional
14 discussions need to be made between CN and
15 the municipalities.

16 My main argument is the lack of
17 access and inconvenience to our residents.
18 Our region has been historically left
19 behind when it comes to creating access,
20 whether it be by airports, commercial rail
21 or long overdue energy considerations for
22 our regions.

23 There are currently a couple
24 bottlenecks on Western Avenue and Main

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1 Street between the Village of Matteson and
2 the Village of Park Forest, just to name a
3 few.

4 There has to be some kind of
5 tangible evidence that moving more freight
6 in this instance has some kind of economic
7 impact for our region. It's all
8 theoretical at this time.

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It's sort of an abstract

9
10 concept. Most people perceive that this is
11 a business deal, an acquisition.
12 Conceptually, I am for moving more freight
13 but we have to turn this precept of yes, it
14 is good and show it's something tangible.
15 It is like trickle-down
16 economics. And with a very effect of
17 public policy, people have to have faith in
18 it and wait and it never happened. When
19 there's a cause and effect that has yet to
20 be tested, municipalities must be tried in
21 their effort to make sure their quality of
22 this life is not diminished in this
23 business deal.
24 Ladies and gentlemen, there

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1 appears to be a fallacy -- there appear to
2 be some fallacies in their arguments in
3 this business deal.
4 Respectfully submitted, State
5 Representative Al Riley.
6 MS. ADAMS: I would again just like
7 to remind the crowd to please be respectful
8 of the speakers regardless of their
9 position.
10 Your silence would be a great
11 response to that as an option. Now we have

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12 Doug Whitley. Following him is Timothy
13 Kasien and Rick Reinbold.
14 MR. HIGGINS: Good evening. I'm
15 Doug Whitley, President of the Illinois
16 Chamber of Commerce.
17 I speak tonight on behalf of
18 employers and employees in this region.
19 Transportation is one of the cornerstones
20 of the Illinois economy and specifically
21 here in the Chicago region.
22 We have numerous transportation
23 issues that must be addressed and this EJ&E
24 acquisition by CN is only one of multiple

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1 activities that should take place in the
2 future.
3 One of the components of our
4 mission is to promote the infrastructure
5 investment in this community and in this
6 state. Businesses depend upon it.
7 Infrastructure is the engine of
8 our economy. I'd like to quote from the
9 Transportation Commission report delivered
10 earlier this year to the United States
11 Congress.
12 It says quote: It is an
13 overstatement to say the nation's potential
14 for the creation of wealth will depend in

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15 great part on the success of freight
16 efficiency.
17 This report talked about choke
18 points in our nation's system of
19 transportation threatening this regional
20 economy and the nation's economy. Chicago
21 is one of the most critical choke points
22 that begs to be addressed.
23 CN's proposal to acquire the
24 EJ&E will ease the choke point enabling

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1 more efficient flow of goods to and through
2 the region providing and protecting jobs.
3 It is a proactive start by the private
4 sector to begin an important long-term
5 improvement process. Much more needs to be
6 done and it will take many years to do all
7 that needs to be done, but it is a start.
8 And that's why I'm here today.
9 Freight congestion poses a
10 threat to the Illinois economy. It's time
11 to remove the uncertainty about the
12 timeliness of transportation supply chain
13 in the Chicago Metropolitan area.
14 Not long ago, Chicago region was
15 the third largest intermodal freight hub in
16 the nation. Today we are fifth, largely
17 because of areas like Kansas City and

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18 Memphis doing more to provide more and
19 reliable efficient rail service.
20 Two-thirds of the nation's cargo
21 containers moves through Illinois, most of
22 which moves right through the Chicago
23 regional area. The rail industry employs
24 many people and thousands more depend upon

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1 the distribution of goods and services that
2 move through Chicago.
3 Efficient Chicago area rail and
4 truck networks are critical to the nation's
5 economy, not just Chicago's. The CN
6 acquisition is but one of many positive
7 steps that must follow.
8 It is in the state's interest to
9 insure that Northeastern Illinois remains
10 the transportation hub of North America.
11 In my opinion, the State of
12 Illinois has been sorely absent and silent
13 when it comes to being extremely helpful in
14 giving and providing comfort to these
15 communities that there will be construction
16 projects, solutions and comfort to these
17 communities that have the greatest concerns
18 about the future of rail freight traffic in
19 Illinois.
20 Mitigation is appropriate and

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21 necessary but it will take time and
22 cooperation on the part of many, including
23 the municipalities, the state, and the
24 Federal Government and yes, the CN.

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1 MS. ADAMS: You are at time. I'm
2 sorry.

3 MR. WHITLEY: But every one of us is
4 dependent upon increased jobs and increased
5 economic in our state.

6 MS. ADAMS: Thank you. Just to
7 remind everyone, we do have the strict
8 three minute limit. If you have more
9 comments, we do invite you to go to the
10 open house to extend your comments.

11 Okay. We have Timothy Kocian
12 followed by Rick Reinbold and Cynthia
13 Corso-Heath.

14 MR. KOCIAN: Good evening. My name
15 is Tim Kocian and I'm here representing the
16 homeowners on Aberdeen Road in Frankfort.

17 THE COURT: Could you spell your
18 last name, please?

19 MR. KOCIAN: My name is spelled
20 K-O-C-I-A-N. To let you understand where
21 we are situated in this, Aberdeen Road is
22 on the north side of the railroad tracks
23 and there are houses on the south side of

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24 Aberdeen Road on the north side.

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1 The entrance to Aberdeen Road is
2 a couple hundred feet from the crossing of
3 Harlem Avenue. When the train stops, the
4 traffic on Harlem Avenue, you cannot get in
5 or out of Aberdeen Road and if you have an
6 emergency, you are going to be lucky if the
7 cars aren't blocking it.

8 And there's only one way to get
9 in and out. And people are going to be in
10 jeopardy if you don't do something about
11 that crossing.

12 I understand that Cook County is
13 not interested in doing something about
14 that crossing because nobody who is
15 affected by that crossing lives in Cook
16 County. They all live in Will County.

17 Cook County owns the crossing
18 but they do not have any people that are
19 living off of it. If you come to Aberdeen
20 Road, I will show you that -- you'll be
21 surprised how close the train runs to
22 people's back yards.

23 It's up on a fifteen foot
24 embankment and as the train goes through,

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1 you can feel the vibrations. And they'll
2 wake you up at night even across the street
3 where we live, which is 300 feet away from
4 the track.

5 I have measured the current
6 trains from our front porch which is on
7 your 65 d/b/a and I measure them 70-74
8 d/b/a sustained on the current, let alone
9 what's going to be proposed.

10 That could be waking you up six
11 to eight times a night. And I think
12 everyone realizes what the effect on people
13 is if they are going to be sleep deprived
14 by being woken up in the night six to eight
15 times.

16 The railroad, I understand, has
17 argued that the EJ&E has been there for a
18 hundred years, so people get over it.
19 You've had a railroad there, you knew that
20 when you moved in.

21 well, we knew the character of
22 the railroad and the way we look at it, the
23 character has been sustained and has set a
24 precedent for the last hundred years.

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2 because of the character of the railroad,
3 communities have grown up around the
4 railroad that are consistent with that
5 character. It's too late to change the
6 character of the railroad now.

7 The time to make it into a super
8 highway for transit is long past. Thank
9 you.

10 MS. ADAMS: Rick Reinbold followed
11 by Cynthia Corso-Heath and Robert Ukokian,
12 if I'm saying that correctly. Do we have
13 Rick Reinbold? If not, Cynthia Corso Heath
14 followed by Robert Ukockis and Julie
15 Furgason.

16 MS. CORSO HEATH: Okay. Thank you
17 to the STB for allowing us to speak
18 tonight. My name is Cynthia Corso Heath.
19 That's C O R S O, H E A T H. I'm a
20 long-time resident of Frankfort and the
21 southern suburbs. I am currently serving
22 as a village trustee in Frankfort. I am
23 also on the board of the Lincolnway Public
24 Safety Communications Center which

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1 dispatches police, fire, and other
2 emergency 911 calls.

3 The draft EIS confirmed what we
4 knew, that the proposed acquisition of the
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5 EJ&E line by this Canadian company will
6 have severe impacts on our quality of life.
7 Air pollution impacts on the quality of
8 life in our community. Not only will this
9 harm the home values of our nearby
10 residents, but it will greatly disrupt the
11 flow of traffic and commerce.

12 The CN is already projecting a
13 400 percent increase in rail traffic across
14 our Frankfort crossings. Buses will not be
15 able to get children to schools on a timely
16 basis. This may disrupt school schedules
17 and could result in increased school costs
18 to purchase more buses. Emergency vehicles
19 will not reach fires or medical cases
20 quickly. Police dispatched to emergencies
21 will be hampered by delays at all of these
22 train crossings. Dozens of cars will sit
23 waiting for trains to pass, burning costly
24 gasoline and spewing exhaust fumes into the

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1 air. The risk of accidents will increase
2 significantly.

3 Mitigating this impact will cost
4 hundreds of millions of dollars. But why
5 should U.S. taxpayers have this burden when
6 only the Canadian National railroad is
7 benefiting? I understand the need to

8 improve transportation in the area. I've
9 observed years of analysis over the
10 potential impact to residents and the
11 environment of a third Chicago airport near
12 Peotone. Before I-355 was constructed,
13 there was also much study and work to
14 mitigate negative consequences of these
15 significant transportation benefits and was
16 all part of the planning and mitigated.

17 It amazes me now that this
18 Canadian company's acquisition of railroad
19 tracks with its resulting dire consequences
20 for Illinois residents might be approved
21 without requiring them to pay for relief
22 for the affected residents. This is in
23 stark contrast to the requirements which
24 were placed upon those other transportation

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1 improvements.
2 I'm also not personally
3 comfortable with the CN record of
4 communicating with and cooperating with the
5 public. The Canadian government itself has
6 raised concerns about safety issues. All
7 we're doing is relocating this problem from
8 one part of the area to another. They are
9 a profitable public corporation, and I
10 don't expect them to assist with any of

11 these improvements without being forced by
12 the federal government. Thank you.

13 MS. ADAMS: Robert Ukockis, followed
14 by Julie Furgason and Sam Dendrinis. Is
15 Robert here? Julie Furguson.

16 MS. FURGASON: My name is Julie
17 Furgason. That's F U R G A S O N. And I
18 speak as a lifelong Park Forest resident
19 and as an educator in the area.

20 As much as I'm concerned about
21 the pollution and noise changes involved
22 with the proposed acquisition, I am even
23 more concerned with access to safe and
24 quick passage of emergency and medical

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1 vehicles that will most likely be halted by
2 the proposed acquisition specifically over
3 already assessed critical at-grade
4 crossings at Cicero in Matteson and Western
5 Avenue in Park Forest and Chicago Heights.

6 If this acquisition is approved,
7 I hope the board and the surrounding
8 affected towns and Canadian National have a
9 plan implemented before increased rail
10 traffic occurs. This plan should include
11 updating railway crossings to include
12 facilities for emergency vehicles to cross
13 during a train's passing at at-grade

14 crossings. This plan should include grade
15 separations for vehicle transportation.

16 My understanding is that
17 Canadian National wants this acquisition
18 approved within the year. This acquisition
19 should not be approved until emergency
20 vehicle access plans are implemented for
21 the safety of all towns involved.

22 It frustrates me that CN will
23 gain revenue from this acquisition but is
24 willing to pay only 5 to 50 percent of the

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1 cost to improve crossings.

2 In addition to the concerns for
3 emergency vehicle access, this acquisition
4 will also stifle economic growth in the
5 south suburbs. And, once again, it seems
6 only beneficial to Canadian National's
7 interests without considering the thousands
8 of citizens adversely affected.

9 MS. ADAMS: Sam Dendrinis followed
10 by Vicky Urban and Conrad Urban.

11 MR. DENDRINOS: Hi. My name is Sam
12 Dendrinis, D E N D R I N O S. I'm a
13 resident of Frankfort, and my family and I
14 reside about a mile south of the EJ&E train
15 track.

16 I had a chance to review the
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17 environment draft impact statement, and I
18 do have concerns about the amount of volume
19 of rail traffic and the length of trains
20 that will be coming through our community.

21 You know, I don't live exactly
22 on the tracks. My house does not vibrate.
23 My glass doesn't shake, but I can hear the
24 train in the background. But my biggest

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1 concern is, it splits our town in half. We
2 have six crossings in Frankfort; one is
3 only above grade. I think the congestion
4 problem that's going to occur from this is
5 going to be a much -- much more detrimental
6 than the benefit of what's happening.

7 If you look at the statement
8 that Canadian National put in its
9 application for acquiring the EJ&E, they
10 talked about alleviating the congestion in
11 Chicago. Well, the key word there is
12 "congestion." They are just moving one
13 existing problem from one area of the
14 Chicago area to another area. And I think
15 what needs to be done is a hard look needs
16 to be taken at moving the rail further out
17 to some of the more rural areas.

18 what we have in this country is
19 kind of an antiquated rail system that was

20 put in place years ago to deal with a much
21 smaller population. There has been
22 community suburbs that have grown around
23 the rail tracks. And I think -- Again, I
24 know there have been people here tonight

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1 for the railroad; and I understand the
2 economic benefit. I'm all for that.
3 But I think again we're not
4 solving the issue. We're just moving the
5 burden to other communities. And I will
6 say the burden or the congestion that CN
7 faces in Chicago for a couple-day delay in
8 commerce has a far less impact than
9 people's quality of lives in some of these
10 communities this train is going to go
11 through. Thank you.

12 MS. ADAMS: Vicky Urban followed by
13 Conrad Urban and then Gary Kopycinski.

14 MS. URBAN: Hi, I'm Vicky Urban. I
15 live in Frankfort, Illinois.

16 So far this year, according to
17 our news media, there have been four
18 children killed by CN or EJ&E trains going
19 through our suburban residential
20 neighborhoods. That is with only four to
21 six short trains a day, which we can pretty
22 much anticipate when they will be coming.

23 Two are late at night. What might we
24 expect with the amount of trains that

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1 they're planning for our community? Where
2 would we call if we see a child on the
3 tracks? Would they even answer?

4 These tracks were never meant to
5 carry huge amounts of freight even before
6 the area was heavily settled. It was meant
7 to be used as a commuter train and a few
8 short trains from U.S. Steel.

9 Three days ago, there was a
10 derailment in Oklahoma of a freight train
11 carrying oil products. It immediately
12 engulfed the area in a huge fireball. If
13 that happened in our backyard, I would not
14 be here speaking to you tonight. And all
15 the children at Camp Manitouqua, at the
16 grade school across Sauk Trail, or anyone
17 at St. Anthony's Church as well as my
18 neighborhood would probably be dead.

19 MS. ADAMS: Conrad Urban followed by
20 Gary Kopycinski and then Richard Smeaton.

21 MR. URBAN: I'm Conrad Urban, a
22 resident of Frankfort, a former railroad
23 surgeon, and I address the problem of
24 safety of our community.

1 I spent many years of my career
2 training emergency medical responders, and
3 I know that time is of the essence. Due to
4 the present location of the EJ&E track and
5 the proposed length of trains, there will
6 be a large segment of our community,
7 including children at Camp Manitouqua and
8 two schools on Sauk Trail as well as the
9 residents along Aberdeen, my street, who
10 will be denied access by emergency vehicles
11 unless great separations are constructed.

12 Furthermore, if there is a
13 derailment in this area, access by fire
14 equipment or haz-mat teams will be
15 virtually impossible except by a very
16 circuitous route. The above could be
17 solved by overpasses or underpasses at
18 Harlem and Sauk Trail. But Canadian
19 National has already made it clear that
20 mitigation of this sort would fall on the
21 backs of the tax-burdened citizens of
22 Illinois.

23 Obviously with our home values
24 plummeting, our tax base will deteriorate.

1 Is it reasonable to have taxpayers
2 subsidize the profits of large foreign
3 corporations? One might argue that
4 increase in rail traffic in our area will
5 reduce rail traffic in other areas.
6 However, the mitigation necessary to ensure
7 the safety of the citizens is already in
8 place in those areas and would have to be
9 added at the expense of taxpayers for our
10 area.

11 MS. ADAMS: Gary Kopycinski,
12 followed by Richard Smeaton and then Nancy
13 Labb.

14 MR. KOPYCINSKI: Hi. I'm Gary
15 Kopycinski, K O P Y C I N S K I.
16 I'm a village trustee in Park Forest. And
17 I'm here to say that this sale is not good
18 at all for Park Forest. We are concerned
19 about congestion, noise, the impact on our
20 economic development. We are concerned
21 about public safety. We're concerned about
22 a 400 percent increase in rail traffic.

23 It's not uncommon now for cars
24 to wait 20 minutes, 20 minutes while those

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1 gates are down. In the interim, I
2 understand from a representative from CN

3 today that they're not planning on using
4 the switchyard that causes these delays. I
5 wish I could believe that. At this point,
6 I have doubts.

7 I heard from a CN representative
8 today about \$2 billion in profits,
9 75 percent of which is supposed to go
10 towards capital. I can tell you where they
11 can put that 75 percent. We need it down
12 here.

13 we are concerned about a
14 shopping plaza which we are working right
15 now to redevelop. We are concerned about
16 school bus traffic. We are concerned about
17 ambulances. We are concerned about our
18 police making it to the north end of town.
19 When those gates are down, the only way to
20 get from the north end or to the south end
21 of Park Forest is under a viaduct. If that
22 viaduct floods, you do the math. We're
23 lost. Thank you.

24 MS. ADAMS: Richard Smeaton followed

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1 by Nancy Labb and Bill Goodwin.

2 MR. SMEATON: Hi. I'm Richard
3 Smeaton. I'm community development
4 director for the Village of Matteson. S M
5 E A T O N.

6 I'd just like to begin my
7 statements by saying the village of
8 Matteson will be submitting written
9 comments in the future. I would also like
10 to echo the concerns of the village of
11 Frankfort and many others. Emergency
12 response times are paramount concerns to
13 the village of Matteson, our police
14 department, our fire department, our public
15 works department. We need to see grade
16 separations at the regional arterials and
17 have funding to construct them.

18 Another concern that's unique to
19 the village of Matteson is the spur line
20 that will be constructed in our historic
21 downtown area. This proposed spur line
22 will connect the Canadian National line
23 that's existing and the EJ&E line. This
24 proposed alignment will interfere with the

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1 Matteson Metra station. They'll be
2 building over the eastern entrance to the
3 station and also interfering with the
4 parking lot that's there.

5 There will be -- This spur line
6 would remove and severely hinder any
7 operations for the existing Kiss-N-Ride,
8 would reduce proposed potential development

9 and property surrounded by the spur, and
10 this would also severely affect the quality
11 of life and the property that will be a
12 hundred percent off this spur line at a
13 second-story level for the existing Holden
14 Park subdivision. Thank you.

15 MS. ADAMS: Nancy Labb followed by
16 Bill Goodwin and Virginia Goodwin.

17 MS. LABB: My name is Nancy Labb, L
18 A B B. I am a resident of Park Forest, and
19 I have resided in the Village of Park
20 Forest for 37 years. We have one major
21 roadway which cuts through our village.
22 This is Western Avenue. It is a route by
23 which our police and fire departments reach
24 various people in the community. It is a

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1 route where our commuters go home, and it
2 is the hub of our economic development.
3 It would be devastating to
4 increase the railroad traffic crossing this
5 street by the proposed 400 percent, which
6 would mean, I believe, 32 trains per day.
7 Some people already avoid this route due to
8 the present eight trains per day. This
9 means that people will just basically
10 circumvent our village.

11 But more -- I understand that

12 there is some realization of the hardship
13 that this will cause Park Forest, but I
14 want to underline and say bravo to
15 representative Jesse Jackson Junior and his
16 proposal that you find the money before you
17 go through with this sale rather than
18 having this sale and then having money,
19 which we just don't have available.

20 The other thing that has
21 concerned me is that I did read that CNN,
22 or CN, is pushing for the sale in October.
23 And then somebody told me no, it's
24 September before this impact study has gone

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1 through. I just can't believe that this is
2 the way that we do business and are going
3 to improve transportation when it's not
4 thought through thoroughly before its
5 enacted upon.

6 The other thing, of course, I
7 think there were a lot of us that were
8 looking forward to the Star Line train
9 coming through, commuter train coming
10 through. And, of course, that will knock
11 that out. And that's been something that's
12 been in the planning here for years. I
13 wish we could just all get together and
14 then seriously all consider the true

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15 impact. Thank you.
16 MS. ADAMS: Bill Goodwin, Virginia
17 Goodwin, and then Evelyn Summick.
18 MR. GOODWIN: Good evening. My name
19 is Bill Goodwin, G O O D W I N. I live in
20 Aberdeen on Aberdeen Road in Frankfort.
21 Mr. Cozzi and Mr. Urban have
22 already spoken eloquently about the noise,
23 the congestion, and the possible safety
24 problems that will ensue if we continue to

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1 have an at-grade crossing at the train
2 crossing at Harlem Avenue, which is very,
3 very close to our street. There's only one
4 way in and one way out, and that's the
5 intersection at Harlem.
6 They've spoken eloquently about
7 the vibration. I won't dwell on that any
8 further. What I will add as a postscript
9 is the train horn. We live close enough to
10 Harlem that we hear every one of them
11 coming and going. It's an unintended,
12 unplanned alarm clock for me. It happens
13 now a couple times a night. If the
14 proposed acquisition goes through, it will
15 be maybe a dozen or more times a night. So
16 for me, it will be sleepless in Frankfort.
17 Final comment, I want to

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18 reinforce what Mayor Holland has said, that
19 we need to take a harder look, especially
20 when it comes to mitigation. I think the
21 completeness of the environmental report
22 would be greatly enhanced if that section
23 of the report was looked at again,
24 especially when it comes to the at-grade

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1 crossings.
2 If I understand correctly, only
3 15 at-grade crossings were recommended for
4 grade separation out of 133. To me, this
5 doesn't pass the common-sense test. I'm no
6 expert, but it just doesn't seem right.
7 The second point has to do with
8 the fact that we will be suffering from
9 financial difficulty, taxpayers locally and
10 in the county and in the state, unless some
11 pretty stern, hard-and-fast rules are laid
12 down by the board about the financing.
13 Many people have commented on the
14 unfairness of having the company profit at
15 the taxpayer expense, and I think
16 eventually that will be the bottom line.
17 Thank you.
18 MS. ADAMS: Virginia Goodwin
19 followed by Evelyn Summick and then Regan
20 Stockstell, if I'm pronouncing those

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21 correctly.
22 MS. GOODWIN: Hello. My name is
23 Virginia Goodwin, G O O D W I N. I echo
24 what he says. I live in the same house.

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1 He will not like that alarm clock, the
2 unattended alarm clock.
3 My additional concerns have to
4 deal with at-grade crossings in Frankfort,
5 which there are six -- none of which are
6 recommended for mitigation in the current
7 plan. At the rate of 28 trains per day up
8 from eight per day and trains two miles
9 long and trains that need one mile to stop,
10 an unintended emergency could still not be
11 averted for one mile, which means three
12 at-grade crossings would be covered in
13 Frankfort before that train stopped. I
14 find that unacceptable. I think for the
15 safety of our citizens, it ought not be
16 allowed to pass the STB's scrutiny.
17 I find it appalling that the CN
18 has offered only 40 million for mitigation.
19 That's nowhere near the cost of mitigating
20 what needs to be done. So I would
21 appreciate your efforts to get a firm deal
22 for more funding for mitigation from CN
23 before its approved. Thank you.

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1 stockstell, and Jim Nolting.
2 MS. SUMMICK: Hello. My name is
3 Evelyn Summick. I'm a resident of Park
4 Forest. Every since I first heard about
5 this railroad acquisition proposition
6 coming through and reading the articles in
7 the newspaper, one of the things that
8 struck me was the fact that the Canadian
9 National, according to the statistics that
10 were printed, never pays for more than
11 5 percent, 5 to 10 percent of mitigation of
12 the grade crossings, yet they are making
13 billions of dollars. And this to me just
14 does not sound right, along with all the
15 other problems that would be happening that
16 everyone else has already commented on
17 today that I won't go through.
18 But what I'm asking the board to
19 do is what these other people have just
20 mentioned. If the Board allows the sale, I
21 am asking you -- indeed, I am begging
22 you -- to please force the Canadian
23 National to have all the funding for
24 mitigation in place before the first train

1 comes down the EJ&E because you know as
2 well as I do that once that train starts
3 coming down the track, it will be too late
4 to say to them, "Oh, by the way, you owe us
5 a few more millions."

6 Please get it in writing first.
7 Have all the money in place because we,
8 these towns out here -- Cook County already
9 has the highest tax rate in the country.
10 The State of Illinois has no money to hand
11 out. Please, we are begging you, make them
12 pay for all the improvements.

13 MS. ADAMS: Regan Stockstell, Jim
14 Nolting, and Jared Weiland.

15 MR. STOCKSTELL: Regan Stockstell,
16 S T O C K S T E L L, representing the
17 Village of Richton Park. I'd just like to
18 echo many of the comments that have been
19 given tonight. It is the village of
20 Richton Park's position we oppose the
21 proposed acquisition of the EJ&E rail for
22 many of the same reasons -- obvious impacts
23 on quality of life.

24 One in particular we feel that

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2 pay closer attention to, you identified in
3 your report that there are two separated
4 grade crossings in Richton Park. That
5 makes me -- leads me to believe that you're
6 considering also the I-57 overpass. If
7 not, then there's indeed only one separated
8 grade crossing in the village and that
9 would be Governors Highway.

10 And to that point, Governors
11 Highway being the main grade -- separated
12 grade crossing for emergency services, that
13 not only services Richton Park emergency
14 services but many of our neighboring
15 communities. Park Forest, Frankfort,
16 University Park, and several others all
17 utilize Governors Highway to access St.
18 James Hospital.

19 what I did see in the report
20 regarding mitigation and as was mentioned
21 earlier by one neighboring communities is
22 the fact that we have flooding issues with
23 regard to the underpass at Governors
24 Highway. In order to take trains a day to

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1 32 will obviously increase the number of
2 trains we have in the community on a daily
3 basis, that would obviously impact traffic
4 that if a situation occurs where there are
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5 storms, which we are seeing that storms are
6 increasing these days, the road's closed.
7 And we're now talking, you know, we've
8 heard talk about the impact on response
9 times. But based on that impact on
10 response times, we're now talking possible
11 loss of lives. And I don't think that the
12 profit of companies such as Canadian
13 National should be valued higher than that
14 of human life.

15 So I'm saying that once again
16 the Village of Park Forest does oppose the
17 acquisition. But if it is to occur, we
18 would strongly encourage the STB to look
19 further at a second or third separated
20 grade crossing at Cicero Avenue. This is
21 shared by both communities of Richton Park
22 and Matteson.

23 Once again, we'd like to echo
24 that I don't think it could be stated any

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1 more emphatically; but absolutely if this
2 is to go through, the recommended
3 mitigation should be highly funded by
4 Canadian National and not the federal
5 government, local, or state. They should
6 pay for their profit. Thank you.

7 MS. ADAMS: Jim Nolting, followed by
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8 Jared Weiland, and Mark Steinman.

9 MR. NOLTING: My name is Jim

10 Nolting, N O L T I N G. I'm a
11 resident of Frankfort, and I'd like to talk
12 about the economic impact. I'd like to
13 preface my comment by saying that I'm a
14 very -- proponent of free trade. I have no
15 problem with a Canadian railroad purchasing
16 American assets.

17 However, I do strongly disagree
18 with taxpayers subsidizing the purchase.
19 You're talking about enhancements for
20 roads, safety, sound abatement that will
21 exceed a billion dollars. And most
22 likely -- and this is going to have to come
23 from some sort of revenue source: federal,
24 state, local. It's either going to be

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1 additional taxes, or it's going to be taken
2 out of an existing fund. And so I just
3 don't think that that's an appropriate
4 expenditure of taxpayer dollars to help
5 subsidize a foreign acquisition.

6 Also on the economic impact
7 front is values of homes. I know my -- I
8 moved to Frankfort about six years ago, and
9 my value of my house is the same as it was
10 six years ago. Now, if the train goes

11 through there, I know the value of my house
12 is going to decline. And you multiply that
13 impact by the thousands of homes that run
14 up and down that line and, again, you're
15 talking about something that is, again,
16 going to be a considerable amount of money.

17 So I do hope the STB definitely
18 takes into account the economic impact
19 issues because, again, I think it's going
20 to be to the billions of dollars. And this
21 is taxpayers footing the bill for a
22 takeover by a private company. Thank you.

23 MS. ADAMS: Jered Wieland,
24 followed by Marc Steinman and Kevin

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1 Burns.

2 MR. WIELAND: Jered Wieland,
3 W-I-E-L-A-N-D. I'm also a resident
4 of Frankfort.

5 The only reason I'm here is
6 because the railway that I moved in close
7 to used to have a small number of trains.
8 I would not have bought the house where it
9 is if it wasn't for the historic use of the
10 tracks as they were. When they were first
11 built, they were in cornfields, I'm sure, a
12 hundred years ago.

13 Things have changed in Chicago
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14 in the last hundred years. It's a little
15 different story now. You've got
16 communities all around the tracks, all the
17 way up and down the 198 miles or whatever
18 it is.

19 So if they were going to use the
20 railroad the way it was originally built
21 and intended, I wouldn't be here. Nobody
22 would care. There would be six trains
23 coming by my house like there currently is.
24 I would sleep fine.

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1 My house backs up to the tracks.
2 Luckily, I'm not a light sleeper. My wife
3 is. It's going to be detrimental for her.
4 She's currently fighting cancer. It's not
5 the best thing to have trains rumbling
6 through your backyard when you need to get
7 a good night's sleep as part of your
8 health.

9 The other point I wanted to make
10 was Mr. Jackson's rep was conflicted
11 because a third and a third and a third.
12 Supposedly a third of the people in that
13 district are going to benefit.

14 That benefit, from what CN has
15 said, is going to dissipate within two
16 years and be totally gone. The benefit

17 inside the arc is going to be backfilled
18 within less than two years, if I'm correct,
19 as admitted by CN.

20 So they are basically going to
21 screw us out in the suburbs along the track
22 to have a temporary gain inside the loop,
23 and then that's going to be gone. And then
24 where are we going to be?

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1 So as Mayor Holland mentioned,
2 we need to look long term instead of short
3 term. We need to get back out into the
4 cornfields with new infrastructure is what
5 the answer needs to be.

6 The only positive thing I've
7 heard tonight about this transaction
8 happening was -- I believe his name was
9 Jorge from the Southeast Side -- said that
10 it was going to have a positive
11 environmental impact.

12 The only environmental impact I
13 heard was it was going to cut 289 jobs.
14 But if he's accurate, that is the only
15 benefit I've heard of this whole thing. So
16 please consider that.

17 Everything else that's been
18 brought up is negative. There's going to
19 be an 800 percent increase for me

20 personally at my house in train traffic and
21 pollution and vibration. And yes, my
22 windows do shake.

23 The fact that CN has been
24 brought up by the Canadian government as

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1 having a very poor safety record, not even
2 on the charts, and they're going to
3 increase by 572 percent the amount of
4 toxic/hazardous material coming within a
5 couple hundred feet of my house is
6 ridiculous, and there's no mitigation for
7 anything.

8 That grade crossing at Harlem,
9 yes. I cannot get into Aberdeen if there's
10 a train. And neither can the ambulance,
11 neither can -- a neighbor just died not too
12 long ago. Thankfully it wasn't due to a
13 train, but it very well could have been.

14 And I'm okay with the sale if
15 they mitigate everything, but it shouldn't
16 be me losing a hundred thousand dollars'
17 value on my home that I've saved 13 years
18 to buy my first home and then turn around
19 and take my tax dollars to fix everything
20 that only happens because CN changes the
21 characteristics of the track.

22 Thank you.

23 MS. ADAMS: Marc Steinman, followed
24 by Kevin Burns and Father John

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1 Siemianowski.

2 MR. STEINMAN: Hi. I'm Marc
3 Steinman. That's S-T-E-I-N-M-A-N. I'm a
4 resident of Aberdeen Road in Frankfort.

5 well, if nothing else, CN and
6 the Surface Transportation Board now
7 realize one thing. In the absence of
8 direct communication on CN's part, common
9 sense and ethics, people will stand up for
10 their rights.

11 But as always, the facts of this
12 issue aren't really that complicated.
13 First, this is a railroad, as many -- as
14 many have said before, that was put
15 together over a hundred years ago and
16 operated as a Class II operation. The
17 growth and encroachment of suburbia during
18 that time has been permitted by
19 municipalities and accepted by adjoining
20 residents based upon that fact.

21 we're now faced with a Class I
22 operation: Not what we signed up for, pure
23 and simple.

24 And I'd like to know -- I know

1 it's not a question-and-answer period. I'd
2 like to know how many times has the Surface
3 Transportation Board been faced with the
4 transition of a Class II operation to a
5 Class I operation of this magnitude through
6 this much of suburbia?

7 Second, we're only dealing with
8 this issue in this particular manner
9 because CN is taking advantage of the
10 federal government's lack of forethought in
11 providing adequate protection of its
12 taxpayers and citizens by providing the
13 appropriate representation.

14 Surface Transportation Board,
15 when I first heard what your cause was,
16 you're not the people that should do it.
17 After all, if this were an aviation matter,
18 the response to this potential change in
19 operation would be quite different as it's
20 now occurring in Chicago.

21 Changes in traffic patterns
22 dictate the entire shutdown and elimination
23 of neighborhoods. This is no different.

24 The Surface Transportation

1 Safety -- or Surface Transportation Board's
2 noise projections are flawed. As was
3 pointed out by one of my neighbors, he
4 measured 70 decibels in excess on the north
5 side of Aberdeen. People living on the
6 south side are going to see in excess of
7 80 decibels every time a train goes by, 28
8 times a day. That means nobody sleeps on
9 Aberdeen.

10 And fourth, I'd like to keep
11 things very, very simple. And, finally,
12 transferring problems of railroad-citizen
13 interface from one area to another doesn't
14 solve anything; it only helps CN.

15 If this railroad didn't exist
16 today and CN wanted to build a loop around
17 Chicago, they couldn't permit this rail
18 line in the area that we're talking. That
19 in and of itself is saying something. It
20 just -- (applause).

21 Thank you.

22 MS. ADAMS: Kevin Burns, followed by
23 Father John and Gregg Markmann.

24 MR. BURNS: Kevin Burns, B-U-R-N-S.

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1 I'd like to speak on two
2 components, one locally. When this all

3 started almost about a year ago, there was
4 discussion at the kitchen tables of my
5 neighbors.

6 I live in Frankfort. I moved in
7 about three years ago. I'm a licensed
8 Realtor and a licensed appraiser. I grew
9 up the first eight years of my life in
10 Riverdale. I lived directly behind a
11 switchyard. So for me to purchase a house
12 near the railroad tracks, I was fully
13 understanding what I was purchasing.

14 Many planning boards in all
15 these communities that are affected have
16 passed and looked at the environmental
17 components of putting houses next to these
18 tracks, and they've all been vetted.

19 what you have here, I feel, is
20 you have a neighbor, the train tracks, who,
21 you know, you have a good relationship with
22 your neighbor. When the neighbor changes
23 and the use changes, that could have a
24 dramatic effect on how your neighbor is

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1 treated and how the environment is
2 impacted.

3 Just to put it in some
4 commonsense terms, I had my daughter, my
5 six-year-old daughter, get off the bus, and

6 she started talking about the train because
7 there was one going by as we were walking
8 back. And she said, "Daddy, Daddy. My
9 girlfriend Katie lives over -- one
10 subdivision over, and she" -- they live
11 near the tracks. And she said, "when she
12 sits on the toilet, the water splashes up
13 when the engine goes by."

14 So that is your environmental
15 impact that I'd like to add based on all
16 the studies you have.

17 Speaking from a regional
18 standpoint -- because this is really not a
19 NIMBY-Frankfort issue; this is really a
20 regional problem. And when you look at the
21 impact of an 8 billion sales company,
22 2 billion -- what's to say -- they've been
23 very straightforward about the
24 profitability of hauling more HAZMAT

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1 materials and items around.

2 And, you know, we've already
3 experienced more tax money spent. We just
4 had to move up a firehouse that's being
5 built south of our tracks because we don't
6 have any fire stations. And so Station 5
7 is now being built, and Station 4 hasn't
8 been built yet because of the anticipation

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of the environmental and safety issues.

This company -- and my wife's Canadian. This company is very profitable. They're -- they seem to have a rush to judgment on this. What's to say that vertically integration, a Chinese company or someone else comes along and buys them after this? And what type of control do we have on the environment, environmental impact?

So I would just like to add that to the component in your thought process.

Thank you.

MS. ADAMS: Father John followed by Gregg Markmann.

FATHER SIEMIANOWSKI: Good evening.

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My name is Father John Siemianowski, S-I-E-M-I-A-N-O-W-S-K-I, and I'm pastor of St. Agnes and St. Paul's Catholic Churches in Chicago Heights, one on the south side of the tracks, one on the north side of the tracks. I presently for the past 12 years have lived on Chicago Road four blocks north of the tracks.

As has been stated before, all major health care facilities in the area are located on the north of the EJ&E

12 railroad tracks: St. James, Chicago
13 Heights; St. James, Olympia Fields;
14 Ingalls, Harvey; Advocate, Hazel Crest.
15 For all people who live south of the
16 tracks, this becomes a health and safety
17 issue.

18 The closest facility if stopped
19 by a train is to either send them to
20 Indiana, Margaret Mercy, or to St. Mary or
21 one of the other, Riverside in Kankakee.

22 All railroad crossings in
23 Chicago Heights are at grade level, except
24 there's one underpass. It's an old

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1 one-lane road walkway into the steel mills
2 east of East End Avenue at Butler. But you
3 take your life into your hands riding on
4 the road prior to getting to the one-lane
5 bridge that's falling down, but it does get
6 you under.

7 Another concern about schools
8 besides safety of ambulance or emergency is
9 that if you operate a school near the
10 tracks, which we do, the purchase affects
11 tardiness of teachers and students.

12 For students, tardiness is an
13 excuse for failure. For teachers, if you
14 have a room of 20 or 25 students

15 unsupervised waiting for a teacher on the
16 other side of the tracks, it also can be a
17 disaster. So I think that's very important
18 for anyone with -- all of us with schools
19 around there.

20 Response time for fire and
21 police, as has been said, is affected. It
22 concerns where major equipment is staged,
23 and in a town like Chicago Heights, we have
24 some equipment on both sides, but it sounds

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1 like some of the towns don't have equipment
2 on both sides of the tracks.

3 Chicago Road, Route 1, is
4 presently a major north-south connecting
5 the south suburbs and into Chicago.
6 Presently, when the ten trains go by,
7 there's usually a half-mile backup when the
8 gates go up. Add to that the prefab homes
9 that use Chicago Road as their journey, and
10 then they turn onto Route 30 going west.
11 It adds miles of congestion and traffic.

12 And I live on Chicago Road,
13 8 feet off the road, so I can tell you.

14 Finally, negative effect on
15 local economy. Last night I waited five
16 minutes for a parked train on Chicago Road,
17 turned around and went to a different town

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18 to eat my dinner. It affects the local
19 economy, local restaurants and tax base.
20 Thank you.
21 MS. ADAMS: Gregg Markmann, followed
22 by Sakhawat Hussain.
23 MR. MARKMANN: My name is Gregg
24 Markmann. That's M-A-R-K-M-A-N-N. I'm a

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1 resident of Frankfort.
2 And as a resident of Frankfort,
3 I want to express my grave concern over the
4 proposed purchase of the EJ&E by CN.
5 You're aware of the many, many concerns of
6 my town, along with a large coalition of
7 dozens of other towns united in our
8 opposition to this life-packing event.
9 As for the effects on Frankfort
10 alone, the increase in rail traffic will
11 literally cut my town in half, with almost
12 no viable passage from one side of town to
13 the other. We have one small, antiquated
14 underpass, which is in near disrepair.
15 There's no other access corridors for many
16 miles around. Frankfort's neighboring
17 towns on either side have no underpass at
18 all.
19 In addition to this isolation
20 effect, our town's future growth will be

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21 permanently stunted as both business and
22 resident alike will be effectively cut off
23 from each other. This will have a very
24 true and real Berlin Wall effect on my town

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1 as well as other towns, with economic and
2 tax-generating consequences from businesses
3 and homeowners alike due to the permanent
4 isolation we will suffer on each side of
5 these tracks.

6 This will also have negative
7 growth repercussions throughout the entire
8 Southland region, which is currently in
9 many respects undeveloped. And it's -- but
10 it's also one of the most promising areas
11 for development in the entire Chicagoland
12 area. This acquisition will kill much of
13 that development, in my estimation.

14 I respectfully urge you to take
15 this potential economic disaster through
16 unintended consequences into consideration,
17 not to mention the safety and environmental
18 issues for which I'm sure you're being made
19 aware of by myself and countless other
20 opposers of this tragic potential purchase.

21 MS. ADAMS: Sakhawat Hussain.

22 DR. HUSSAIN: My name is

23 Dr. Hussain, H-U-S-S-A-I-N. And I'm very

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24 grateful to the railroad company for giving

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1 me the training. I was trained at Illinois
2 Circle Hospital.

3 This was one of the best
4 hospital because of the accidents. The
5 railroad would bring all the patients
6 there, and they would unload those patient.
7 This was the best surgery training program
8 ever there was. The president of the
9 American Medical Association four years in
10 a row was in that hospital, and we got some
11 very good training.

12 But, on the other hand, coming
13 back to the real perspective, we are being
14 railroaded right here. And there is
15 nobody -- (applause).

16 Let me tell you what Aberdeen
17 Road is. I moved there in 1980, 28 years
18 ago. I've been living in the same house.
19 When I moved there, the Frankfort was a
20 town that we could not buy a bread of loaf.
21 We used to go to Matteson. There was not a
22 White Hen Pantry. There were not nothing.
23 There was just a restaurant, La Posada,
24 which got burned.

1 And my daughter was born in that
2 house, then graduated from the school.
3 There was one high school that exploded.
4 The class went to 1200. My other son, four
5 years behind, went to a different school.
6 When he graduated, the class exploded. We
7 have a third school now.
8 When we send instruction to our
9 friends how to come to Aberdeen Road, we
10 write down it is sandwiched between the
11 crossing sign and the actual tracks. This
12 is how close we live. So if you hit the
13 tracks, you have gone too far. It's 2 mile
14 long. There are houses on each side of the
15 road, and there are houses on each side of
16 the track.
17 A 2-mile-long train, there is no
18 way in the world the 1.1 million people who
19 die in this country every year because of
20 heart attack, and half of them die in their
21 houses -- this is a fact -- because they
22 cannot get immediate attention and
23 ambulances.
24 One minute is too much. 30

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1 second is too much. Every second count to
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2 save a life. We are trading profits for
3 the lives of the residents of Frankfort and
4 southwest suburbs. This must stop.

5 And I have news for you. If --
6 in 1980 when I moved, the area codes were
7 only (312) and (815). There was no (708),
8 (630), (847). The population has exploded.
9 The people at risk are thousand and
10 thousand and thousands die more right now,
11 and we need to take care of them.

12 There are children. There are
13 schools. There are hospital that will be
14 totally cut off. There were two railroad
15 tracks when I moved, not one. One of them
16 is a -- is now a plank on which we can ride
17 the bike. If Canadian National want to do
18 it, they should turn into a bike path, not
19 into a disaster -- (applause).

20 MS. ADAMS: First of all, we want to
21 thank you for your comments, everyone who
22 had comments tonight.

23 This concludes the public
24 comment portion of our meeting. The open

1 house will continue until 9:00 where Vicki
2 and John, as well as other engineers and
3 representatives, will be there to ask --
4 answer questions that you might have.

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5 Thank you. Thank you very much.

6 (Proceedings concluded at

7 7:48 p.m.)

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