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September 11, 2008

Phillis Johnson-Ball  
Surface Transportation Board  
395 East Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20423

REF: STB Finance Docket No. 35087

Dear Ms. Johnson-Ball:

We live in New Lenox, Illinois. We would like to voice our opposition to the CN Railroad acquisition of the EJE Railroad and ask that the STB deny approval of this acquisition. The Canadian Railroad's acquisition of the EJE railroad would cause MAJOR problems with traffic gridlock, safety, noise and air pollution, diesel pollution, and increased hazardous material dangers at ENORMOUS financial and personal costs to our local communities.

The tracks run through both residential and commercial areas, near schools, parks and walking paths, through the south end of Cook County and Will County, then through Joliet and the western suburbs and northward. The CN is not willing to make and pay for the necessary safety upgrades to crossings (overpasses/underpasses) and noise and pollution mitigation that it would take to make this acquisition reasonable and safe.

We went to a rally last night and the Joliet public hearing tonight where we learned that CN is proposing an INITIAL schedule of 28 trains a day (it's currently about 6-8 trains) with the trains being up to 3 miles in length and will have trains running in both directions on the two existing tracks at the same time. Do the math! It would basically cause a MAJOR traffic gridlock to our area for the greater part of each day. We do not have the infrastructure in place as Chicago does to handle this kind of rail traffic. Our major arterial streets are sometimes a mile or more apart and most do not have overpasses and/or underpasses. There would be more accidents because more people would try to BEAT the long train delay by going around the gates.

There would be long delays in people's everyday travel, getting to work, getting their children to nearby schools. The additional rail traffic would also impact accessibility to local businesses and would adversely impact businesses dependent on motorized transportation of their goods and services.

There would be an adverse environmental and health impact on people and wildlife that would result from the additional noise and air pollution caused by the 2-3 mile long diesel trains running near or bisecting our currently pristine residential areas, parks, wetlands, bicycle/walking trails and schools.

The quality of our everyday lives would be greatly changed, the safety of our residents and children adversely affected and the value of our homes would decline because of the impact the additional rail traffic would have on our community.

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The increase in rail traffic would essentially cut our communities in half and Emergency Services would be unable to reach many people in a timely fashion and would affect their ability to get those people to hospitals quickly. Most of our fire stations and hospitals are currently located north of the rail line and the community does not have the financial ability to build additional stations and hospitals south of the rail line.

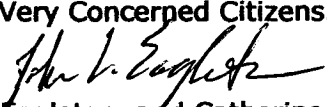
The local communities and citizens get nothing in return for Canadian Railroad's (a private corporation) use of the tracks, monetarily or otherwise. The only winner in this situation would be Canadian Railroad. We were advised that Canadian Railroad (a foreign corporation) keeps about 25% of its income. We were advised that CN is only willing to pay about 50 million dollars for mitigation for the ENTIRE railway and that CN would pay only 5-10% (if any) of the cost of building underpasses or overpasses. It was estimated that just one overpass would run about 30-40 million dollars and the municipalities would have to pay for most, if not all, of the mitigation costs.

We were advised Will County alone has about 35 major arterial streets that would be impacted and that New Lenox has 5 "at grade" crossings. It would cost just the taxpayers of New Lenox \$150 million dollars to put overpasses in to make our crossings safe, make Emergency Services available to all citizens, and to avoid traffic gridlock. The State and Federal governments do not have the money to pay for this mitigation. Our local communities cannot even get the money from the State and Federal government that we need to improve and expand Route 30 in our area (which has been in need of widening and improvement for at least 10 years due to the increase in population and resulting traffic) and any relief is far in the future. Our local communities DO NOT HAVE the financial resources to pay for the mitigation we would need as a result of the CN acquisition. Our citizens are already at the breaking point when it comes to taxes and are begging for relief from the already high taxes we are paying.

Even if the Municipal, State and Federal governments could afford to pay for these improvements, why should our government pay for something that benefits a large PRIVATE corporation which is making ENORMOUS profits at our expense and at such GREAT cost to our safety, health, and disruption of our personal and business affairs and quality of life. If CN wants the EJE railway to make their rail transportation more efficient and more PROFITABLE, then CN should bear the burden of paying for ALL the mitigation costs that the increased rail traffic would necessitate including overpasses/underpasses at every "at grade" crossing, installing noise barriers and pollution mitigation systems along the entire railway, and paying for and reimbursing local communities for any haz-mat and/or environmental cleanups that may arise as a result of the increased rail traffic.

THIS IS NO SMALL MATTER. PLEASE PUT YOURSELF IN OUR POSITION AND CONSIDER THE IMPACT THIS WOULD HAVE ON YOU AND YOUR LIFE IF YOU WERE LIVING NEAR THIS PROPOSED MAJOR RAILWAY. THE IMPACT WOULD BE DEVASTATING! PLEASE MAKE THE RIGHT DECISION AND VOTE AGAINST THE CN ACQUISITION STB FINANCE DOCKET NO. 35087.

Your Very Concerned Citizens.

   
John Eagleton and Catherine Eagleton