

August 27, 2008

Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20423

Surface Transportation Board;

The Village of Barrington is facing a disastrous situation that will destroy our economic viability, public safety and quality of life. I am a resident of Barrington, Illinois. My home is in Jewel Park and abuts the E J & E railroad tracks that run through Barrington. We have lived here for 6 ½ years and have 2 small children, ages 8 and 6. The proposed Canadian National Railway Company acquisition is alarming and extremely concerning on so many levels.

First, increasing the frequency of freight trains would cripple this town. Two major railroad tracks meet and divide Barrington. The Union Pacific includes Metra commuter traffic as well as freight trains. The E J & E tracks intersect the Union Pacific tracks as well as cross over our three major roads, Route 14, Route 59 and Lake Cook Road. All of these roads are highly traveled and back up for miles when trains travel through Barrington. There is no way to get to an opposite side of town without crossing one set of tracks. Yes, this may appear as only an inconvenience but public safety is at stake. It is not as simple as just slowing someone down who is running errands.

Second, public safety would be jeopardized by this acquisition. Specifically, The Barrington Police & Fire Departments are located on the southeast side of town. Good Sheperd Hospital, our only emergency medical facility is located on the northwest side. All emergency calls have a "golden hour" in which medical care must be delivered to patients. Time is critical. The health and safety of all persons residing in Barrington is at risk if our emergency medical care providers cannot get to us or get us to the emergency room.

Third, the amount of accidents with trains would increase with the increase in train traffic. Railroad crossings present a serious hazard for school buses, pedestrians, bikers and commuters. We are a town who prides itself in being a Tree City. We love the outdoors and many residents walk, bike, and run each and every day. Currently, not all of our tracks have the proper Pedestrian crosswalk, gate or even sidewalk (i.e. the brand new Citizens Park on the E J & E track). On daily average I cross a set of train tracks in Barrington 10-12 times; walking my dog, conducting daily business and carpooling children to and from activities. Barrington High School is located on Lake Cook Road between both the E J & E and the Union Pacific tracks. The more and more people encounter train traffic during their daily commute, the more likely train/traffic related deaths will occur. Careless and reckless driving can result from heightened anxiety, frustration with long traffic delays due to increased train traffic, and inexperienced younger drivers. In addition, our School District 220 estimates that school buses cross the train tracks 375-400 times per day. The time our children will spend on buses will double if not triple just getting to and from school each day. And please don't forget the danger that school buses face each time they approach a train track and wait for a traffic light. We will never forget the horrific bus accident in Fox

River Grove, Illinois (1995) in which several children lost their lives and hundreds of others forever changed when their school bus was hit by a train.

Fourth, environmental toxins of which I include noise, pollution, and toxic chemicals are a concern. As mentioned we are considered a Tree City. We are surrounded by a tremendous Forest Preserve system, hundreds of small lakes and ponds which total 90 square miles. There are thousands of species in this area. Many of which are protected, threatened and endangered. This number will increase as a result of increasing freight train traffic and dangers to their living environment. In addition, the current traffic on the E J & E tracks results in extremely high decibel horn usage through the night and early morning hours. The vibration caused by the trains shakes my home and damages its foundation. The CN proposal estimates an increase of 4-20 trains per day. Today, alone, a Sunday, there have been 3 between 1 and 3 pm. What are the track conditions? Are the existing tracks capable of handling the increase in freight traffic as well as an increase in freight load? If they are not and there is a derailment, or hazardous spill the result would be catastrophic. In addition, we are concerned about the potentially hazardous freight to be carried on these rails. What safety and control mechanisms are in place to secure these rails as the trains travel through the heart of our country? Is the freight as closely monitored as I am at O'Hare International Airport?

Finally, I am aware that you are receiving hundreds if not thousands of letters regarding this acquisition. I urge you to read and consider every single one. This is not an issue that we take lightly. This acquisition would devastate families, businesses, and this entire community. Please take seriously our concerns. We trust that you will assess all of the impacts of this merger for the people and not for bigger business. If considering this as only a shift from affecting some towns and villages to affecting different ones, I urge you to notice that those towns were built around existing train traffic. They thrive and function along with heavy freight train traffic. Their infrastructure existed and developed to handle it. The Village of Barrington is not prepared and cannot handle the increase in freight train traffic.

Please do not accept the Canadian National proposal until you know that all of the safety, traffic, noise and environmental issues are addressed and can be rectified. Thank you for your dedication and service.

Sincerely,



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