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1 SCOPING MEETING FOR THE PROPOSED CANADIAN NATIONAL
2 RAILWAY COMPANY ACQUISITION OF THE ELGIN, JOLIET
3 AND EASTERN RAILWAY COMPANY

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STATEMENT OF:

10

JOHN HUNTER

11

AUGUST 28, 2008

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BARTLETT HIGH SCHOOL

15

701 SCHICK ROAD

16

BARTLETT, ILLINOIS

17

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Telephone: 312-781-9111

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REPORTED BY: Barbara J. Polke,

24

084-002486

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MR. HUNTER: My name is John
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2 Hunter, and I'm a 15-year resident of West
3 Chicago. I have some reasons why I
4 vehemently oppose the acquisition of the
5 EJ&E Railroad.

6 The first is the
7 increased traffic is going to mean
8 increased waiting time at train crossings.
9 In West Chicago, the EJ&E line has no easy
10 alternate route when going east on
11 Washington Street. In the event of a long
12 train on the EJ&E, my only option is to
13 turn around and go back to Roosevelt Road
14 to Joliet, adding at least ten minutes for
15 this detour.

16 The West Chicago
17 crossing was not on the list of crossings
18 slated for mitigation. This is a public
19 safety issue as well as a huge
20 inconvenience.

21 Secondly, the increased
22 traffic is going to mean increased
23 hazardous materials entering our community.
24 During my considerable wait time at the

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1 current crossing, I personally observe
2 trains carrying hazardous materials,
3 including anhydrous ammonia and various
4 acids. Those are just the marked cars.

5 I'm sure there are numerous cars carrying
6 things I wouldn't approve of.

7 The increased risk to my family
8 is totally unacceptable.

9 If there were a
10 derailment and the wind was blowing in the
11 direction of my home, my whole family could
12 be wiped out if these hazardous chemicals
13 were released.

14 Third, the increased
15 noise of the almost fourfold increase in
16 trains is going to be a huge problem.

17 I currently have a
18 problem with the trains that are in that
19 area now for two reasons: One is that
20 because it's a crossing of lines, each
21 train crosses the opposing lines and makes
22 a clack, clack for every single car. So in
23 the instance where there's a train that's,
24 say, 160 cars, that's 320 clack, clacks,

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1 which are very loud and easily invade my
2 home.

3 Then, also, the noise
4 from the midnight trains who, for some
5 reasons, blow their horns, like, much more
6 than they need to. One or two short blasts
7 should be enough to clear the crossing if

8 there were something there. I have
9 consistently heard trains blast their horns
10 five, six, seven, eight times at 2:00 a.m.
11 on Sunday, so I find that they are not very
12 polite and courteous regarding how they
13 blow their horns.

14 My next topic is the
15 property values, that I believe that this
16 acquisition will result in a lowering of my
17 property values, because who would want to
18 live in a town that is congested by nonstop
19 train traffic.

20 Lastly, I'm opposed to
21 the increased pollution which would be a
22 result of the increased active and idling
23 trains as the trains are waiting at the
24 crossings.

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1 So I believe that with
2 regard to my community, this would be a
3 disaster that just is untenable and would
4 result in us having to move away from the
5 area just to keep the quality of life that
6 we enjoy. I think that's it.

7 One of my big concerns
8 regarding the release of toxic gases or
9 chemicals in my community is that even
10 though the railway companies will profit,

11 do profit greatly, from the traffic that
12 comes through our community, there has
13 never been any attempt at a proactive
14 detection type of early-warning system,
15 which may protect my family in the event of
16 a toxic chemical spill as a result of a
17 derailment.

18 When I asked a
19 representative of the CN, his mind-set was
20 purely only in reaction rather than early
21 detection. That's it.

22 Okay. I just got done
23 speaking with a representative of the
24 engineering firm, and my question to him

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1 was why was the crossing at Washington
2 Street in West Chicago not on the list of
3 crossings that would need or require
4 mitigation for this approval to go through.

5 what he told me was
6 somewhat disturbing in that he said that
7 there were three criteria that they
8 considered for these crossings: 1 was the
9 number of cars; No. 2 was the number of
10 trains; and No. 3 was the number of cars
11 per train.

12 I said, well, we get a
13 lot of trains through there, and the

14 problem I have is that that's a very slow
15 crossing. The trains come through that
16 crossing almost always at less than 10
17 miles an hour, which results in the long
18 wait times that residents experience at
19 that crossing.

20 what he told me was that
21 the proposal that CN had given them stated
22 that at that crossing, the trains come
23 through at 40 miles an hour, and I just
24 want to say, for the record, I have

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1 personally observed that has never
2 happened. There is not a train that goes
3 by, whether on the EJ&E line or on the
4 Union Pacific line, that they come through
5 west Chicago at 40 miles an hour; always
6 much, much slower. So that's a discrepancy
7 that I just want to make sure gets put in
8 the record.

9 (End of statement.)

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