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Red River Valley & Western

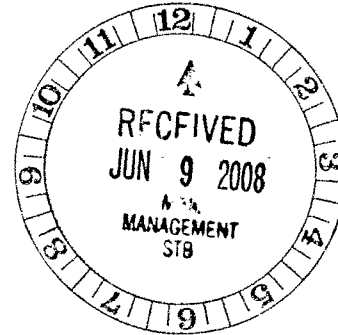
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RAILROAD COMPANY

P.O. BOX 608, WAHPETON, NORTH DAKOTA 58074

May 27, 2008

Anne K. Quinlan, Esquire
Acting Secretary
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, S.W.
Washington DC 20423-0001



Re: STB Finance Docket No. 35087

Dear Ms. Quinlan:

I am the President and CEO of the Red River Valley & Western Railroad (RRVW) which operates 510 miles of track in Southeastern North Dakota. We are a Class III railroad which was originally spun off from the BNSF. I am writing in support of the Canadian National Railway's recent request that the Surface Transportation Board (STB) establish a time limit for its environmental review and final decision in CN's proposed EJ&E transaction.

The RRVW does not connect with the CN, so I have no commercial stake in this transaction. However, I have worked in the railroad industry for 40 years and I am concerned that the failure to establish definitive time limits for railroad transactions is a dangerous precedent for the industry as whole, and particularly for the short line and regional railroads.

Short line railroads provide a vital link for small and medium size shippers that would otherwise be cut off from the national railroad network. We keep transportation costs competitive, we allow producers to reach far away markets and we take heavy trucks off local roads. I would argue that a railcar that takes three truckloads off the highway and that is three times more fuel efficient than comparable truck transportation is of great benefit to the community. But unlike many industries in this country, railroads are up close and personal for the communities we serve. We run trains in and around towns, we cross highways and we don't run in total silence. It is understandable that our profile will sometimes raise concerns among certain individuals and communities.

I understand that the Board has a responsibility to hear, and if appropriate, act on the concerns raised by these individuals and communities. But it seems to me that the railroad should be given the benefit of a timely decision. Absent that, they will lose their financing and their shippers will make alternative transportation arrangements.

Short line railroads are particularly vulnerable to lengthy delays and indefinite timeframes for decision. New short lines are considered start-up ventures by the financial community. We operate over track that requires significant capital investment to eliminate deferred maintenance and are located in areas where a history of poor service has driven away business. The Interstate Commerce Commission and the successor Surface Transportation Board understood the importance of this fact when they established an expedited process for approving short line transactions. I believe that process made a major contribution to what is a healthy and growing short line railroad industry today. It was good public policy and it should be continued.

I appreciate the opportunity to provide my perspective on this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew J. Thompson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a prominent flourish at the end.

Andrew J. Thompson
President & Chief Executive Officer