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175 Pheasant Run Trail
North Barrington, IL 60010
15 September 2008

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

Reference: STB Finance Docket No. 35087

Dear Ms. Johnson-Ball & Surface Transportation Board Members:

I am a twenty year resident of the Barrington Area (Barrington, Lake Barrington, and most recently North Barrington). For the past 11 years, I have enjoyed the privilege of serving the community in an elected capacity on the Barrington Community Unit School District #220 School Board. During my Board tenure, I have held all 3 officer positions, President, Vice-President, and Secretary.

I am writing to strongly oppose the acquisition of the EJ&E rail line by Canadian National based upon significant safety and traffic issues that would result from this proposed acquisition. These concerns are in addition to the well-documented effect that a 400-percent increase in freight traffic will have on our local economy.

Our Barrington public school system serves more than 9,200 of our community's children from pre-Kindergarten through 12th grade. Our service area covers 72 square miles, incorporating 11 municipalities in 4 different Illinois' counties (Cook, Lake, McHenry, and Kane). Based on our expansive service area, we have students (ages 3-21) already forced to ride busses for 45 minutes or more each way to school. Significant delays and safety situations will occur throughout our District with increased rail traffic since the EJ&E rail line intersects seven major thoroughfares in our school district. Our busses cross the EJ&E tracks on average 840 times per day to deliver students to and from our 12 school campuses. Therefore, any increase in freight traffic will dramatically affect the commute times of our students, staff, parents, and community volunteers.

Additionally, our flagship high school, Barrington High School, is located only 600 feet from the EJ&E tracks, raising critical safety and environmental concerns resulting from increased freight traffic. Approximately 1,700 of the high school's 3,000 students either walk or transport themselves each day to school. Almost every student who walks to Barrington High School must cross these tracks since the EJ&E tracks are located between the school and the town center. We can expect the characteristic rushed and impulsive behavior of teens crossing the tracks to get to school, which will dramatically increase the risk of tragic consequences.

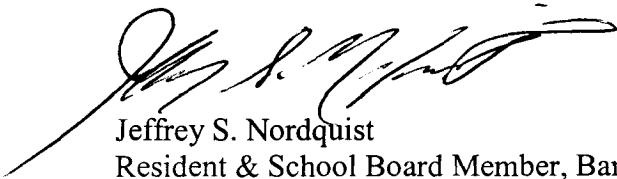
Unfortunately, our immediate area is already aware of the tragic consequences when train accidents occur. On October 25, 1995, seven students were killed and twenty-one injured when a train collided with a school bus in Fox River Grove, Illinois. This accident occurred at a signaled, grade/level crossing – of note, all EJ&E crossings in our school service area are grade/level crossings.

Response to emergencies throughout our community will also be greatly affected. The EJ&E tracks roughly bisect our community. An average length freight train (approximately 2 miles long) can easily block all major intersections at one time, adding critical minutes to police, fire department, and ambulances reaching our schools in emergency situations. Transportation to our primary medical facility, Good Shepherd Hospital in Lake Barrington would also be vastly impaired.

In closing, as an elected official and fellow citizen, I find it unconscionable for the United States' government to approve this acquisition. The EJ&E purchase will directly benefit a foreign company to the extreme detriment of our residents' quality of life, in addition to burdening our country's taxpayers with increased taxes to fix any environmental and safety issues which will be the guaranteed result if the EJ&E acquisition is approved. You, as I do, have a fundamental fiduciary responsibility to this country and its citizens, which I trust you will remember as you conduct due diligence and render a decision.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey S. Nordquist

Resident & School Board Member, Barrington Community Unit School District #220

xc: Rep. Melissa Bean
Sen. Dick Durbin
Sen. Barack Obama