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Surface Transportation Board

CN EJ&E EIS - FD-3387

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June 12, 2008

Ms. Anne Quinlan, Esq.
Acting Secretary
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street SW
Washington, DC 20423

Subject: Canadian National Railway Co. – Control – EJ&E West Company, STB Finance Docket #35087

Dear Secretary Quinlan:

I am President of the National Railroad Construction & Maintenance Association (NRC) and I am writing to express the Association's support of CN's proposed acquisition of the Elgin, Joliet & Eastern Railway Company (EJ&E). This transaction will improve rail service throughout the Chicago metropolitan area, to the benefit of railroads and their customers as well as the Chicagoland region generally.

The NRC represents over 200 railroad construction, supply, and professional service firms. As part of the EJ&E acquisition, CN is planning on a major new investment into the rail infrastructure it would acquire. This investment would create thousands of new construction and supply jobs in the railroad supply chain. Many of these jobs are based in the Chicagoland region and others are spread throughout the country. These are good, solid, well-paying American jobs which can not be exported and they will provide a real shot-in-the-arm to our economy.

The freight railroad system and its ongoing expansion is both an economic and environmental success story. The U.S. has the world's most efficient freight rail network and that is a key competitive advantage in this global economy. Our environment is well-served by the railroad system because it uses far less fuel per ton-mile than any other mode of land or air transportation. This acquisition would help continue to improve that system.

The City of Chicago is a major hub for North American rail traffic. Unfortunately, Chicago currently suffers from congested rail corridors into and out of the City. Rerouting CN traffic from downtown to the less congested EJ&E line in suburban Chicago will result in more efficient rail operations. This not only will benefit CN and other railroads, but also the business community that relies on rail service as well as the many communities in the downtown area that will experience reductions in train traffic.

I also support CN's Request for Establishment of Time Limits for NEPA Review and Final Decision, filed in this proceeding on May 13, 2008. I recognize that as train traffic moves off of downtown Chicago rail lines, some communities along the EJ&E right-of-way will experience train traffic increases. The STB's Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) identified in its final scoping decision the issues that need to be studied in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) it is preparing. SEA has been examining

these issues for the last several months and has provided many opportunities for interested citizens, community officials, and government agencies to provide comments. Under CN's proposed timetable, SEA will continue to have sufficient time to complete its study of these issues and the public will have the opportunity to again provide input to the STB during the period that will be provided by SEA for comment on the Draft EIS.

I understand and support the need for a meaningful environmental review. However, regulatory review should not be open-ended and should not be used to kill this important and beneficial proposed transaction. I urge the Board to complete its environmental review process expeditiously, and to approve the transaction as in the public interest.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and for your work on behalf of our country.

Sincerely,



Chuck Baker

President

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cc: Victoria Rutson, Chief, Section of Environmental Analysis
cc: Chairman Charles Nottingham
cc: Vice Chairman Francis Mulvey
cc: Commissioner Douglas Buttrey