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Surface Transportation Board
Washington, DC

Re: Comments on EIS for Canadian National Purchase of EJ&E

Dear Board,

I am writing in support of the Canadian National purchase of the Elgin, Joliet, & Eastern Railroad. Listed below are my comments on various points being considered and debated.

- The shift of CN trains from original lines in the more densely populated Chicago and suburban area north and south of Chicago to the EJ&E line will result in reduced noise, diesel exhaust, and automobile delay pollution.
- The shift to the EJ&E will result in faster train running times through the region verses the old alignment on the CN/IC and cause less delay time at crossings.
- Road crossing mitigation on the EJ&E line should be accomplished with the established investment formula by federal, state, local, and railroad for over/under passes of railroads.
- This case should be judged as all other previous acquisition cases undertaken by the STB and not influenced by politics of an election year or threat of retroactive legislation to assist a few constituents when the outcome will have a positive effect on many.
- The strategic purchase of the EJ&E by the CN will improve supply chain efficiency for the US and Canada and improve capacity with little new investment for the Chicago region and central US. The CN ability to improve transit by 24 hours through the Chicago region from Port Rupert is a competitive advantage in the short term and will allow for west coast North America port capacity to improve. This will also improve competition between the BNSF, UP, KCS, CPR and CN into the Midwest from the West Coast and Galveston/Houston area benefiting wholesale, retail, and consumers to contain transportation costs.
- The EJ&E line has the capability for capacity expansion on a private investment basis to accommodate future increases in volume. The right of way would lend itself to parallel expansion for commuter/passenger usage.
- The proposed but unfunded Star Line for commuter train usage by Metra should be considered in the future state but it is hard to argue with the EJ&E or the CN that it is part of the package when the project is not funded, not fully defined, and not a negotiated part of the deal when you consider the status of the acquisition as

defined before the board. The Star Line if available right now would have full ridership like the rest of Metra's operation in the Chicago region due to density of population, market demand to go to the work place, shopping, dining, school access and local, state, and highway road congestion along with high gasoline and diesel prices.

- The shift of CN's boxcar operations from the Markham Yard, Indiana Harbor Belt, and Belt Railway Company accomplishes several things:
 - CN control of its carload traffic and segregation of intermodal allowing for better flow of their traffic through the Chicago terminal by using a under capacity terminal at Kirk Yard with improved interchange connections.
 - The Indiana Harbor Belt and Belt Railway gain capacity without capital investment which can be utilized to absorb anticipated gains in traffic in the next 20 years.
 - CN's ability to drive industrial development along the EJ&E line will improve transportation access for customers that EJ&E was not able to generate as this was not one of their main strategic focus areas. It will provide new opportunities to expand supply chain capacity for this major consumption area.

I believe it is time to support the CN purchase of the EJ&E, treated as all other transactions that come before the STB, it has supply chain and transportation advantages that will never be fully developed by the EJ&E, will improve capacity for the railroad industry as a whole in North America with a far reaching impact beyond Chicago.

Yours truly,

James T. Wilson