



Office of the Mayor

Village of Hazel Crest

Dr. Robert B. Donaldson

September 11, 2008

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

REF: STB FINANCE DOCKET NO. 35087

STATEMENT
HEARING ON THE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT ON THE CN
ACQUISITION OF THE ELGIN, JOLIET & EASTERN RAILWAY

The future economic vitality and quality of life of the residents of the greater Chicago area and the south suburban region in particular depend upon continued investment in making our rail and highway systems more efficient. The rail industry has played an historic part in development of Chicago and its surrounding communities as transportation hubs. Increased freight traffic on our nation's rail system has created a bottleneck in the Chicago metropolitan region which threatens the future vitality of the rail industry in our region. The CN proposal to purchase the EJ& E Railway is a privately funded step in reducing this rail congestion.

Several points which I would like to comment on from the Draft Environmental Impact Study:

Opponents of this transaction have claimed that the increasing rail traffic on the EJ&E will pose a greater threat to the region as a whole. On the contrary, when a freight train travels through a less densely populated area, the net benefit will be that fewer people will be impacted by a freight train accident or hazardous material release.

In addition, the decreased traffic in more densely populated communities where the CN trains currently operate through Chicago and south suburban communities like Harvey would lead to fewer accidents involving pedestrians, cars and bicyclists.

The STB must recognize as with many decisions in government there are winners and losers however the governing body must make a decision on the basis of the greater good. This transaction will benefit the greater good of the Chicago region, the South Suburbs, and the country.

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Further, this transaction would ease a bottleneck that threatens to force railroad industry to find ways to bypass Chicago and its 24-30 hour delays. The Canadian National Railway's subsidiary, CN, has its corporate headquarters in the south suburbs and a major transportation facility adjacent to our community. If CN cannot operate efficiently in Chicago, it would inevitable look to another community through which it could operate more efficiently. The result would be a devastating loss of jobs in an area which already has a dearth of employers with good paying jobs.

The STB should not be bullied into considering factors that are unrelated to the benefits of this proposal. At the end of the day, this acquisition is good for the Chicago region both economic and quality of life aspects. And it's right for the country's transportation system as a whole. I urge the STB to include these positives impacts in the final Environmental Impact Statement.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Robert B. Donaldson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Robert" and last name "Donaldson" clearly legible. The middle initial "B." is smaller and less distinct.

Dr. Robert B. Donaldson
Mayor