

9-16-08

Dear Phillis Johnson Ball,

My name is Karen Wingfield. My husband and I have been residents of New Lenox for 9.5 years. I am writing this letter in regard to the proposed buyout of the EJ&E Railroad by Canadian National. I am writing to say that I am **vehemently** opposed to this buyout for many reasons. It will have devastating effect on the entire region, my community, my neighborhood, and my family.

The region for which this buyout is proposed is the fastest growing area of Will County. The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning states that the "Will County population accounted for 47% of all growth in the region (an increase of 171,000 persons) for the seven-year [2000-2007] period." (http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/census_8-7-08.aspx) In addition, Will County has seen an 89% increase in population over the last 18 years. This is staggering. The region has experienced an incredible amount of growth with NO expansion of our infrastructure. Many of our main arterial roads are merely two lanes. My best examples are Route 30 and Laraway Road which are the two main thoroughfares from Frankfort to Joliet. Much of these roads are only two lanes. As a result, this forces traffic onto many of our North/South arterial roads like Wolf Road, Schoolhouse Road, Cedar Road, and Gougar, just to name a few. These are also only two lane roads and all of these roads will cross the tracks in this proposed sale. As you can imagine, the traffic in this area is excruciating and with all the budget woes in Springfield and

Washington, there is no relief in sight. Now factor in approximately 25-30 trains anywhere from 2-3 miles long, and we will live in a perpetual state of gridlock.

As a result of this sale, my community will become divided. Residents will be prevented from getting to school, the hospital, or to work in a timely manner. An additional increase in traffic and long wait times will delay buses and students from getting to school, causing even cautious drivers to become irate and impatient. Even more importantly, it will prevent ambulances, fire trucks, and police from responding to the other side of town. Out of frustration, people will make unsafe choices, increasing the probability of an accident exponentially. I am also concerned by the proximity of these tracks to several of our schools. The proposed sale would cause continuous train traffic and noise far too close to our students.

We as a community will bear the cost of all the road improvements and safety measures that would be mandated by such a sale. It would become our responsibility to build over/underpasses, relocate fire, ambulance, and police to satellite locations, creating an inconceivable tax burden. From 2004 – 2006, Canadian National had a net profit of 1.26B, 1.56B, and 2.09B, respectively.

([http://www.wikinvest.com/stock/Canadian_National_Railway_Company_\(CNI\)](http://www.wikinvest.com/stock/Canadian_National_Railway_Company_(CNI))). Unfair does not even begin to describe what Canadian National is proposing to do to our community. They are making a **possible** 30 million dollar commitment to mitigation that is based on only a 5-year projection. What happened to moral obligation and ethics?

My husband and I grew up on the south side of Chicago in Burnham and Hegewisch. We lived with the freight trains on Torrence and Burnham Avenue for many years. We DO NOT want to begin experiencing those headaches again. There are too many times that I can recall sitting at the crossings for over 20-25 minutes. We were late for many activities and events, impacting our quality of life.

Additionally, we are raising three teenage sons who are very active in school and sports. One of my boys currently has his driver's license and the other will be able to obtain his permit in October. It is frightening to think of them driving in our immediate community if the sale is approved. They will have to continually cross railroad tracks to go anywhere in the immediate area.

The thought of this purchase being approved makes me physically ill. I implore you to really consider the impact this sale will have on the hundreds of thousands residents in this area, including Frankfort, Mokena, New Lenox, Manhattan, Joliet, and Plainfield.

Sincerely,

Karen M. Wingfield
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New Lenox, IL 60451