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January 28, 2008

Charles D. Nottingham
Chairman
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, S.W.
Suite 1220
Washington, DC 20423-0001

Dear Chairman Nottingham,

Fast and dependable train service is important to me and to my community. It will become even more important as gasoline prices continue to increase. The application submitted by the Canadian National does not adequately address the future of the passenger trains linking Chicago to Champaign, Carbondale, Memphis, New Orleans and 18 other cities. These trains could experience longer travel times and increased delays as a result of this transaction. The cities along the route will be negatively impacted if the service quality deteriorates on this route. Also, since passengers connect between these trains and other trains at Chicago, deteriorated service on this corridor will impact passenger trains serving the entire country. Each year I attend a conference in Chicago where I stay at the hotel/convention the entire time. Right now, I must pay \$40 per night to park my car in addition to gas money. I am normally there for about 4 days. I have been taking the train as it is more cost efficient for my organization as well as the convenience of not driving. I work on projects on the way up, arrive and have a short cab ride to my hotel. I feel that taking this service away would be a mistake. There were about 30 other people on the same train as I that were going to Champaign, Carbondale and Effingham. This train service is greatly appreciated by many in these communities. Therefore, I request that the Surface Transportation Board make the establishment of a new route, of like or better quality, a condition of the merger. Building a new connection at Grand Crossing, combined with enhancements to the Norfolk Southern track into Union Station, is the only viable solution. Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,

Tiffany DeSpain

Surface Transportation Board
CN-EI&E EIS - FD-35087
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