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18 SEPTEMBER, 2008

PHILLIS JOHNSON-BALL
STB Finance Docket No. 35087
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington DC 20423-0001

Dear Ms. Johnson-Ball,

I appreciate the opportunity to offer comments to the Board regarding the proposed acquisition of the EJ&E Railroad by the Canadian National Railroad.

I live in Hawthorn Woods, IL close to the EJ & E tracks and have spent my professional life as an engineer and executive in the transportation industry, working for a large manufacturing company supplying railroad, truck and automotive parts and have acquired considerable knowledge of these industries both here and overseas.

I have been appalled by the inaccurate "facts and statistics" deliberately used by local politicians and municipal officials in opposition to the proposed takeover. This has persisted even after many of their statements have been proven wrong. One of their major objections as stated is that the CN is a foreign railroad with foreign investors, giving the impression that CN is owned only by the Canadian Government and that there are no overseas investors in any US railroad. These actions have galvanized opposition from many residents who have accepted without question the "facts" published and widely distributed by local officials. (This is after all an election year).

Attempts to give a more balanced view based on an understanding of the transportation system have impressed a few, but most of the opponents say that they do not want a railroad in their community, forgetting that the railroad was here first and that without railroads our economy would screech to a halt.

They also ignore the significant benefit's the transaction would bring to other nearby communities.

Here are some of the positions presented by opponents to the transfer at many public meetings, even after they have been given proof that these positions are wrong:

- "In our area there will be 20 - 25 trains a day each 10,000' long."
- In fact the CN plan 17 - 18 trains each about 6,500' long.

- "Trains will block train crossings in this area for 15 - 20 minutes per hour." A train moving at 40 mph as proposed by the CN would pass a crossing in less than 2 ½ minutes.

- "CN must pay 100% of all new infrastructure costs, overpasses, underpasses and road rerouting, etc. just as US railroads do."

Most of these costs for US railroads are funded primarily by, Federal, State and Municipal Governments with railroads paying probably less than 10% .

- "CN takeover will cause great delays to existing rail commuter traffic."

We understand that CN had already held meetings with METRA authorities and no delays are considered likely.

- "CN operates an unsafe system."

CN is a Class 1 railroad and has an excellent safety record.

- "The takeover will increase noise to intolerable levels at grade crossings."

CN has already come to agreements over "quiet zones" with some municipalities and has approached many more to discuss this matter. Some have refused to meet CN.

- "The change would add considerably to the transportation of hazardous materials throughout our area."

Railroads have proven to be the safest means of moving hazardous materials , but more trains does mean more hazardous materials will pass through.

- "Pollution levels will rise, trains produce more pollution than trucks."

The fuel consumption, the largest portion of pollution as presented by the opposition is about 3 or 4 : 1 times better than trucks. One train load equals between 200 - 400 highway truck's worth of capacity, depending on the commodity transported. One train of about 150 cars has about 1200 steel wheels and 2 or 3 locomotives. The highway equivalent is about 5000 rubber tires and 300 diesel engines.

Other individual points of opposition often expressed are:

- Children are attracted to railroads and may be injured.
- Railroads are sometimes adjacent to parks where children play.
- We don't want any railroads in our town - they are unsafe.
- More pollution from traffic waiting at Grade crossings. (A turn of the key could cure this!)
- Unsafe for pedestrians to cross a railroad track. (It is also unsafe for pedestrians to cross a 4 lane road)
- Railroads should not be allowed near schools.
- My house is very close to the railroad. (The railroad was there when the house was bought.
- Emergency vehicles would be blocked by passing trains.

This is indeed a potential problem but can be overcome by collaboration between local communities. In fact, the Fire Chiefs in these communities have publicly expressed their willingness to adopt the changes to serve adjacent communities when necessary, much to the chagrin of their municipal leaders.

- School buses.

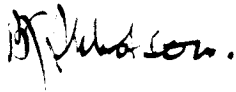
There may be some potential disruption in transporting children to schools, but these can be readily overcome if school officials plan and adjust where

necessary their school bus schedules.

I have expressed my opinion at meetings and in other conversations, that the proposed takeover and expansion of service will be very beneficial to this area overall, and that if the local authorities would join in discussions with the CN, any problems can be overcome.

I do appreciate the impartiality displayed by your representatives in this matter. I look forward to a report from your Board which will bring the parties together and result in a fair and workable solution.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "B. Ibbotson". The signature is written in a cursive, somewhat stylized script.

Brian Ibbotson