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February 13, 2008

Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20423

Attention: Phillis Johnson-Ball
Environmental Filing
STB Finance Docket No. 35087

Surface Transportation Board

CN-B&A-BIS - FD-34007

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HDRB File

Sealed (1/1/08)

STB-35087

Co. Original - Job File

Dear Ms. Johnson-Ball,

As the STB undertakes preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed acquisition of the Elgin, Joliet and Eastern Railway Company by the Canadian National Railway Company, I submit these comments for your consideration.

Given the impact of the freight industry in the northeastern Illinois region, I look to the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) to help discern the regional benefits and impacts of the proposal. CMAP was created and authorized by the General Assembly to provide a regional perspective on transportation, land use and comprehensive planning. Please rely on their data and expertise in making your recommendation. The municipalities that will benefit or lose by virtue of the changed rail traffic patterns must be heard, but this issue is clearly one of regional importance and I look to CMAP to help us understand the details of the impact and suggested mitigation actions.

Specifically, I wish to protect our region's economic vitality as it relates to the freight rail industry and know that the State of Illinois CREATE project is necessary to insure the efficient movement of freight through the Chicago hub. The planned improvements via CREATE must be coordinated with CN in their potential acquisition of EJ&E.

Metra and the entire metropolitan transit system just received new funding for our regional transit system and new commuter services have been identified and prioritized for state and federal funding. Again, it is important to find ways for commuter and freight rail to co-exist without negative impacts on either service. Public/private partnerships and intergovernmental agreements should be utilized to the fullest extent in providing needed infrastructure and operating improvements/enhancements. Our region can only be helped by enhanced commuter rail service and this must be one of our highest priorities.

Safety and community impact considerations are paramount. Every effort must be made to insure the safety of all rail operations and minimize the risk to communities of blocked roadways, hazardous spills and derailments. Vehicular, pedestrian and bike safety must be considered at all crossings and grade separations planned to the fullest extent possible. All plans must consider the impact on our road system and include options to reduce traffic congestion which will be caused or worsened by increased freight rail traffic.

Passenger rail is also a high priority for Illinois and there are some concerns that passenger rail service may be interrupted/slowed by the acquisition. The state has invested heavily with great success in expanded Amtrak service and it is vital that passenger and freight rail find a way to compliment each other in improving rail infrastructure and operations.

Thank you for your consideration of public comments. Please feel free to call on me should there be any role I can play in facilitating further discussion re: the needs and cost/benefit analysis of this proposal.

Best Wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Kathy Ryg". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Kathy" and last name "Ryg" clearly distinguishable.

Kathy Ryg