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Barrington, Illinois 60010

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

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

Dear Ms. Johnson-Ball,

I am writing in regards to the proposed CN buyout of EJ&E railway. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on your review process. I attended the Open House in early January and spoke with representatives from both CN and the STB. After reviewing the proposal, I believe the environmental, public-safety, economic and quality of life impacts of this transaction will destroy daily life in our town.

Barrington has multiple at-grade crossings with this railway. Two of them are within ½ mile of my home and on average we cross both of them at least once a day. Another 2 are within a mile. We purposely chose a home that was in walking and biking distance of the town, the library, the school and the park-district for our young family. As you probably know, Barrington has just completed an award-winning park, Citizen's Park. It is right in the middle of at least two crossings at Route 14 and to the north on Cuba Road. The natural setting, sounds and marsh will be significantly changed should this pass. The thought of 25 trains a day barreling down the tracks at high speeds is extremely frightening and in essence will stop us from using these areas as it will many other families in the community.

Further, EJ&E is not the only train that passes several times at grade through Barrington. There is also the METRA line as well as other freight lines that use the METRA tracks. Within the last six months, there have been at least two pedestrian deaths due to train traffic, the most recent a teen-age boy. There is such congestion already around town during times of high traffic use that I see cars race around closing rail gates frequently. In fact on the day of the Open House, an EJ&E train passed while I was on Route 14. After several minutes, the train passed. The car in front of me made an illegal turn on a street that is a short-cut through a residential neighborhood, and all the other cars drove about 6-7 miles faster than the normal rate of speed. No matter how much communication is done about train safety, if this goes through, people will be injured or die as a result of bad decisions trying to beat the train. Not to mention that if there are accidents, the emergency response time will be significantly delayed due to how many crossings there are. I guess I should be happy that this will force me to eat better and

exercise for fear of not getting to Good Shepard Hospital in an ambulance because with my luck it will be blocked with double trains at Route 14.

Barrington covers a large geographic area and is a populated area with local traffic often traveling several miles to get to schools, stores, the library, etc. In addition, there are hundreds of trucks, vans, service providers that travel through it along Route 59 to get to the north and Route 14 to get further west. Traffic as it is now is often very bad. The congestion that the proposed train routes will cause is staggering. Cars will be backed up from Route 14, to 59, back to Lake Cook. The crossing at Ela will significantly impair the traffic movement at Route 12 in Lake Zurich. The town will in effect be completely grid-locked. And it is not the same as traffic congestion in Chicago or in Buffalo Grove. Those cities have several crossings that are not at-grade. The cars still move while the trains go through. Those communities are not at a standstill while the trains go through. They also have viable public transportation options to allow citizens to get to work, to school or to the doctor's office so they don't have to be stopped by the train. Should this go through, drivers will make bad decisions trying to outwit the train. People, children, most importantly, given the locations of the trains near to schools, parks, library, etc will be at great risk. If the STB rules that this proposal should go forward, it simply must to require CN to devote the financial resources to mitigate these crossings.

Aside from public safety and traffic congestion, the impact this will have economically on the community will be difficult to withstand. Barrington has tried for several years to rebuild its downtown with shops, services and restaurants. It has recently had much success, although there is still a large inventory of vacant commercial space. But to get to these places, you have to cross the tracks, once, sometimes twice, depending on your starting point. The traffic congestion that this proposal will have will deter customers from coming into town. They will simply go elsewhere and the town will decline. This will create a double whammy from a tax perspective, because with a declining commercial base, there will be less revenue for the town to draw on to try to make necessary investments for a growing community. We are already struggling as it is to raise funds for two main reasons: county taxes are staggering and Barrington has a large population of people on fixed-incomes. One important example of that is the recent rejection of two referendums to fund and build two much-needed middle schools. Without a vibrant commercial base, we will be forced to foot more of the bill. And if this goes through, I understand that it is not always required for the company to finance the majority of the mitigation costs, but rather the public is responsible, and since the state has not budgeted for this, it will most likely fall into the hands of the town. Again, if this goes through CN must foot the bill for mitigation at these most populated crossings. This is going to make them money for decades. If it is that important to them, they should be forced to invest the money to make it safe and as livable as possible for the communities along this line.

I hope that in addition to the pure environmental aspects that you study such as noise, air, water pollution, that time is taken to consider the human environment. The quality of human will be ruined should this go through. Can you imagine having to ride a bus for 45-60 minutes before even getting to class and then having to do it again after

school? I think home-schooling will significantly increase in the area. When this railroad was built decades ago, the land was open around it. The issue of at-grade crossings was nonexistent. Now, people live, work and play here. It was simply not designed for this type of volume.

Finally, I hope that the STB is committed to taking a longer-term strategic view of railway traffic in Chicagoland. There have always been trains here and that is certainly not changing in the near future. However, how can they be best balanced to serve the needs of freight, commuters and communities? METRA wanted to use part of the EJ&E line for its STAR proposal, another important initiative that I hope does not go unstudied. What other alternatives exist?

Thank you for your time and attention in this matter. Please closely consider the negative impacts this will have on the citizens of Barrington and other towns along the line and do not allow it to pass.

Respectfully,



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