

1 SCOPING MEETING FOR THE PROPOSED CANADIAN
2 NATIONAL RAILWAY COMPANY ACQUISITION OF THE
3 ELGIN, JOLIET AND EASTERN RAILWAY COMPANY
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9 STATEMENT OF:

10 VICKIE URBAN

11 JANUARY 15, 2008
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14 HOLIDAY INN

15 500 HOLIDAY PLAZA DRIVE

16 MATTESON, ILLINOIS

Surface Transportation Board

CN-EJ&E EIS - FD-35087

Log and Distribution

Date Recd. _____

HDR File No. ✓

19 CHIMNIAK REPORTING & VIDEO

Seamed (Initial) _____

STAFF _____

20 Telephone: 312-781-9111

Cc: Original - Job File

21
22 HDR

23 REPORTED BY: Fran Okrei, 84-1074
24

1 MRS. URBAN: My name is Vicki V-I-C-K-I
2 Urban U-R-B-A-N. I live at 567 Aberdeen Road,
3 Frankfort. And the tracks are in my back
4 yard. They are on top of a hill.

5 The hill separates us from a
6 children's camp. And that is Camp Manitoqua
7 M-A-N-I-T-O-Q-U-A which is across the street
8 from a school, a church with a school and a
9 big play lot.

10 Originally when we moved into the
11 area, we were informed that the EJ&E was kind
12 of ratcheting down and they eventually would
13 be taking up the tracks. Our subdivision had
14 two sets of tracks to the north and two sets
15 of tracks to the south.

16 The north tracks, the two sets of
17 tracks were taken up and it was turned into a
18 walking path from Chicago Heights to Joliet
19 now. On the south where we are, they took up
20 one set of tracks and we were told that they
21 would eventually be taking the second set of
22 tracks up because the steel industry was dying
23 and they wouldn't really be needing it much
24 longer.

1 And it was that information that
2 caused people to develop the areas in
3 Frankfort that they did. Otherwise, if we
4 knew that there were going to be 28 trains a
5 day cutting us off from all of our safety nets
6 such as fire, police, ambulance, getting our
7 children to and from school and going to
8 church, we would not have built there and the
9 whole area would not have built up and
10 certainly the community would not have planned
11 their emergency services the way they did,
12 which are all across the tracks from the
13 people in our subdivision.

14 And if they are going to be tying up
15 the tracks for, they say ten minutes every
16 hour, 28 times a day, we are going to be
17 virtual prisoners on our road because there is
18 no outlet. The only outlet is on Harlem one
19 house length from the tracks.

20 And when the crossing is being used by
21 the train, we can't get out and emergency
22 vehicles cannot get in.

23 They are supposed to be widening
24 Harlem at that point next year. The State of

1 Illinois, Cook County and Will are in on the
2 project. There is absolutely no budget for
3 nor plans for an underpass at that point.

4 We were having problems with them just
5 widening the road because of trying to get out
6 of Aberdeen because we were concerned about
7 how we were going to get across four lanes of
8 traffic at that point.

9 So as you can see, some very serious
10 planning and looking has to be done at the
11 intersection, because it's really bad.

12 My other other concern is that our
13 village and most communities have plan
14 commissions that look to the future and set
15 aside land for usage that they envision to be
16 coming up as the community grows and they do a
17 lot of planning this way.

18 I have yet to find anybody that can
19 tell me that the surface transportation board
20 does any sort of planning. They say as an
21 excuse that these are private companies and
22 all they do is regulate them.

23 My point is that if we had known they
24 were going to keep this as an active set of

1 tracks and this was going to continue to be
2 used by the railroad rather than being
3 abandoned as we had been told, our community
4 would not have planned all of our emergency
5 things to have to cross the tracks, especially
6 with the way they tend to have them tied up.

7 I don't know how we are going to fix
8 this. I don't see -- there's just no way to
9 get out of our road. We have our fire, we
10 have one fire department that doesn't have to
11 cross the tracks.

12 But if they are out on another fire,
13 the other two stations and the -- are
14 inaccessible to us if that intersection is
15 going to be tied up. They would have to go --
16 take a lot of time to go someplace else to get
17 around to finally get to us. And that would
18 probably be devastating to -- for whatever
19 emergency it was.

20 My husband is a surgeon. If he can't
21 get out the entire surgical schedule, if it's
22 a normal day is affected. And if not, if it's
23 an emergency, somebody could die. And there
24 are other doctors that live on that street.

1 So it's not just my husband. There's
2 an obstetrician, there's a neurosurgeon,
3 several other doctors and this is very
4 important for them to be able to get in and
5 out of our road.

6 The congestion backs up -- if they are
7 going to be talking about longer time at the
8 intersection there at Harlem, the traffic
9 backs up all the way to Route 30. And that is
10 a US highway and it interferes with traffic on
11 Route 30.

12 And there is a proposed building of a
13 shopping center on the northeast corner of
14 Route 30, Lincoln Highway and Harlem, which is
15 going to increase a lot of traffic flow and
16 that's going to be an additional problem.

17 So for them to back up traffic like
18 that, it's going to create a nightmare as far
19 as traffic.

20 Again police, our only station is in
21 downtown Frankfort across two sets of tracks,
22 not just one. And those tracks, once -- the
23 same set of tracks on Sauk Trail where they
24 usually come with the police and the ambulance

1 and the fire department is the same set of
2 tracks that also would be included at Harlem.

3 Getting children to and from school
4 and church which it's across the tracks. The
5 grammar school, the church, church school, the
6 play lot, the camp.

7 The safety of the children who use
8 Camp Manitoqua on the south side of the
9 tracks. I have called -- at least four times
10 a year I called EJ&E to let them know there
11 are children on the tracks. That's with, they
12 say, six trains a day. We count four a day
13 and two of them are in the middle of the
14 night.

15 This would mean 28 times a day that
16 there's a possibility of a tragic accident
17 with a child. I know they are not supposed to
18 be on the tracks, I also know children. There
19 is a camp there with all sorts of kids. Yes,
20 they are supposed to be supervised. But if I
21 call four times a year now, I cannot imagine.

22 The other thing would be calling -- I
23 was talking to the people at the table over
24 there and they said that we don't have to call

1 Canada if there's a problem. But we do --
2 they said that they are in Homewood. But I
3 still question the fact that this is a foreign
4 establishment that is operating in our country
5 and I just do not feel that they would be as
6 readily reactive to problems as if it were an
7 American run railroad.

8 They have not a very good record when
9 it comes to working with communities through
10 which they pass and that's even in Canada.
11 There have been lawsuits because they have not
12 done what they are supposed to do.

13 And we also, as I said, since we are
14 across this hill from Camp Manatoqua and
15 Hickory Creek runs underneath the hill, we
16 already have had to call EJ&E about the
17 underpass of the creek.

18 There was like a poured settlement
19 fall through which the creek would travel and
20 it was disintegrating and it took over a year
21 and a half to finally get somebody out there
22 to fix it, even though there was a danger, not
23 only of flooding but also of it having
24 something to do with the tracks and possibly

1 causing a derailment at that point.

2 And my question is, yes, they did fix
3 it but they only fixed it for much less
4 traffic than there is today. And I question
5 whether the specifications that were required
6 of fixing that would be sufficient today if
7 they are going to run 28 longer trains across
8 that track.

9 The other thing is what would the
10 speed limit be that would be imposed on the
11 train traffic or is there a speed limit we
12 could impose on the train traffic through our
13 community that has to do with not only sound
14 but vibrations. And again, we are having
15 problems with our homes.

16 We are having cracks in our
17 foundation. We are having cracks in our walls
18 from the vibration of only four trains a day.
19 Obviously other home values will go down
20 because of the increased usage. The noise and
21 pollution will go up and the wonderful
22 wildlife which is the reason so many move into
23 our area are going to be affected as well.

24 With so many trains, some people are

1 going to be tempted to beat trains at the
2 crossings and right now, we only have two
3 gates at Harlem.

4 And I also want to know how many
5 whistles are we going to have to endure
6 through the night. Will we be unable to get
7 any sleep.

8 So those are just a few of my concerns
9 and I feel that they are definitely reasonable
10 concerns that should be addressed. And I feel
11 that 28 trains a day are far too much to
12 expect our communities to endure, especially
13 when we had been told that we could expect
14 that there would be no trains and the railway
15 was going to abandon the right-of-way, as they
16 had on the north side of our subdivision. So
17 that's more or less my comments.

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