

12456

Surface Transportation Board Incoming Correspondence Record



#EI-10561

E-Filing Correspondence Information		Status: New	
* Required Fields		Recorded by CN EJJW on 09/08/2008	
*Docket #:	FD 35087 0 C	Affiliation:	Self / Individual
*Name of Sender:	John A. Schweizer	Letter Type:	E-filing
Group:			
Attention Of:	Phillis Johnson-Ball	NEPA Type:	Draft EIS Comment
*Date Received:	09/08/2008	In Public Docket?	☒ Yes ☐ No
Date of Letter:	09/08/2008		
Group's Address:	330 Eastern Ave	Phone Number:	847-381-1274
		Email Address:	john_schweizer@sbcglobal.net
Group's City:	Barrington	Group's Zip Code:	60010-4629
Group's State:	IL		

Submitter's Comments

I've lived in the village of Barrington, Ill., for 25 years and for 17 years have been on the Board of Directors of the Barrington area's oldest, largest, best-known and most active environmental organization.

Citizens For Conservation, Inc., is all about saving open space and restoring native habitat (prairies, wetlands, savanna, etc.). It owns and manages several hundred acres of preserves and manage other special sites for the Village of Barrington and both the Cook County and Lake County Forest Preserve Districts.

There are good reasons why this organization has not jumped into the fray against the CN/EJ&E deal despite pressure from assorted local public officials, civic leaders and even some members of CFC's Board of Directors.

At a Board of Directors meeting in March 2008, enough directors opined that 15 or 20 additional trains a day, running 30 or 40 mph, would have very little impact on wildlife or native vegetation, even in nearby Cuba Marsh Forest Preserve, which is bisected by the EJ&E and is home to acres of rare black soil oak savanna. Certainly the trains' impact on birds, deer and other wildlife is nothing compared with that of the thousands of cars and trucks zipping around daily.

And enough directors felt it'd be hypocritical for CFC, an environmental organization, to come out against something that would help reduce regional air pollution and diesel fuel wastage (from idling locomotives on congested tracks).

The real environmental damage -- and it was considerable -- occurred when the EJ&E was constructed 120 years ago and in subsequent decades when herbiciding and other bad practices weren't reined in. All railroads share that history.

So, despite some pressure from Barrington-area officials and pleas from some CFC directors opposed to the CN deal, the CFC Board declined to even bring the matter to a vote.

While local "nimby" opponents hope for some mitigating concessions (an underpass or two, perhaps) from CN to alleviate their anticipated inconveniences, conservationists ought to try working with CN toward improvement of natural areas along the EJ&E right-of-way.

From all the outrage, one would think rail traffic is something new to Barrington. But the UP/Metra Northwest line, which slices through the heart of the congested village, sees from 70 to 75 train movements every weekday: 63 Metra trains and eight to 12 freight movements.

And, lest one think village leaders are doing all they can to reduce traffic congestion, be aware that the village,

inexplicably, is putting a second deck on the sprawling Metra parking area in the middle of town to expand its capacity instead of going with two or three satellite lots in the municipalities surrounding the Village of Barrington, such as Barrington Hills, Lake Barrington, North Barrington and South Barrington. This will encourage even more motor vehicle traffic throughout the village.

STB's Comments

Image Attachment(s)