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6TH DISTRICT, ILLINOIS

**COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL
SERVICES**

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Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-1306

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Ms. Phillis Johnson-Ball
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20423

Re: Environmental Filing, STB Finance Docket No. 35087

Dear Ms. Johnson-Ball,

HDR

I am writing today regarding the scoping of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) being prepared in connection with the application filed by Canadian National Railway and Grand Trunk Corporation (CN) to acquire the Elgin, Joliet & Eastern Railway (EJ&E). Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the scope of the EIS; I appreciate that the Surface Transportation Board (STB) will be thoroughly assessing the potential environmental impacts that may result from the proposed acquisition.

The EJ&E roughly follows the western border of the Congressional District I represent. Rail infrastructure, the EJ&E and many other lines, has played a tremendous role in the development of the Chicagoland region, and continues to serve the economy of the region today. Indeed, the people of Illinois' 6th Congressional District are served well with a system that offers extensive commuter transportation and the movement of goods produced throughout the communities of the district.

My constituents and I want to maintain the viability of our freight and passenger networks as a key part of the economy and overall transportation system that serves northeastern Illinois. As I support the continued operation of a vibrant rail system in and around the Congressional District I represent, I also write to encourage the STB to consider the following areas in the EIS process:

- Paramount to any consideration should be the impact on public safety, especially given the EJ&E's proximity to homes, schools, parks and businesses. The increased rail activity of the proposed acquisition warrants a thorough examination of the corresponding increased risk of the potential for grade-crossing collisions; increased obstructions of crossings crucial to emergency response by police, fire, and medical personnel; and an increased risk of

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CN-EJ&E EIS - FD-35087

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derailment and hazardous material spills (taking into account CN's history and record of safety).

- There are varying degrees of acceptance and discontent with the proposed acquisition in my Congressional District, however, there is near universal agreement that any negative impact that this acquisition would have on bringing the STAR Line service to fruition would be detrimental to the region. The STAR Line is a project that has garnered wide support throughout the Chicagoland region because of the new dynamic it would bring to passenger rail, a revolutionary suburb-to-suburb system. I respectfully submit to the STB that the impact on the region's future rail-use plans be carefully considered as the STAR Line would utilize 36 miles of the EJ&E corridor from Hoffman Estates to Joliet.

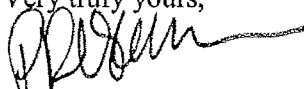
While holding the potential to reduce or eliminate current freight conflicts on the North Central line, freeing capacity for increased or better passenger service, the acquisition also has the potential to introduce additional conflicts at points where commuter rail service crosses the EJ&E line, and these require the comprehensive attention of the STB.

- The EIS must also carefully assess the environmental impact of the proposed acquisition on our natural resources. The EJ&E runs along and through the property of many homes, parks and forest preserves. Appropriate air and water quality analysis should be considered in the EIS to assess both immediate and future impacts of the acquisition. This should include analyses of both the water supply (as some rely on wells and ground water for potable water), and the impact on natural and preserved wetlands. We hold dear the remaining area of preserved natural lands, and we have been presented the unique challenge of balancing the ever-growing demand of development in our suburban communities with the preservation of these resources. It is my hope that the STB will be mindful of the continued effort our area has made, and will apply the same discretion in its EIS process. Just as important, we all desire to see an increased quality of environment to pass along to our children. Thus, I urge the STB to consider the air and water quality impacts.
- The Village of Bartlett, in my Congressional District, just implemented a long sought-after quiet zone. It is my hope that this victory will not be short-lived for the village, and so I am further requesting that the STB examine expected increases in noise and vibration. Any consideration of increased rail traffic should include appropriate accommodations to maintain the quality of life my constituents have worked so hard to build and maintain.
- Finally, all of the above encouraged examinations in the EIS require an appropriate view into the future of activity both on the EJ&E and in the larger region. While the rail industry is a dynamic one, so is region and marketplace in which my Congressional District sits. Accordingly, to the extent possible and in order to appropriately assess and provide for long-term mitigation needs and other

previously considered plans and projections for growth in our area, I encourage the STB to not remain content with an analysis that reaches only as far as the immediate future, but which takes into consideration the long-term needs and growth of our communities. Indeed, analysis of road and rail traffic levels cannot merely be restricted to those of current levels, but rather involve future considerations as our area continues to grow and develop and pursue increased quality of life and economic activity.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the scope of the EIS for the CN's proposed acquisition of the EJ&E. I look forward to continuing to work together to ensure the continued operation and growth of a vibrant rail system in the Chicagoland region. Should you require any additional information to attend to my above requests, please contact David Mork on my staff at 202-225-4561.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Roskam", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Peter J. Roskam
Member of Congress