

COMMENT FORM – STB FINANCE DOCKET NO. 35087

September 21, 2008
Suzanne Kagebein
25732 N. Arrowhead Dr.
Mundelein, IL 60060

I am strongly opposed to an acquisition by CN of the EJ&E rail line! Why would the STB and SEA say YES to a Canadian Company at the expense of so many in the U.S.?

I currently live in close proximity to the RT 60/83 and Diamond Lake Rd. crossings in Mundelein, IL. This area already has major issues with noise and traffic congestion due to the existing freight trains. I have had to sit at the tracks for 8-10 minutes at a time waiting for trains to pass. This has at times caused my groceries to melt/defrost in the car. It has also caused me to be late when picking up my child from school,

If I am stuck in on RT 60/83 going West, I cannot get home when traffic backs up. Due to the narrowing of lanes to one direction each way, it already backs up daily. The only alternative route I have would be to make a U turn and go West on 60/83 to RT 83. I would have to take RT 83 South to Gilmer Rd. Then I would have to travel West on Gilmer Rd. till I reached Diamond Lake Rd. I would then turn right (N) and take that down to the entrance of my subdivision off of Diamond Lake Rd. This is no short jaunt and it creates another traffic nightmare!

If I am stuck traveling East on RT 60/83 at this RRXing, I have NO alternative routes to my home! I have already experienced an issue a few months ago when I was stuck going East (just before the Diamond Lake Rd intersection) and the gates were down for at least 10 minutes with no train. I watched as the people from the front cars got out and looked up and down the tracks in both directions for a train. When they saw none, they started going around the gates! The whole line of cars from both directions proceeded in this manner (with caution). This is a major issue. I have been stuck behind downed gates with phantom trains more than a handful (or two) of times since I've lived in this area. It is a huge safety issue, not to mention (again) a traffic nightmare. (Has anyone reviewed the reports of gate issues?) With the proposed increase in train traffic, what is the percentage of times there would be problems (even without the trains)?

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It is reported that we currently have 5 trains (on avg.) going through this particular RRXing. It is said that this would increase to more than 20 trains a day (on avg.)! If these trains are of the 8-12 minute range, we basically will have a train an hour running down the tracks. How can this possibly NOT NEGATIVELY impact our emergency response system, school systems, air quality, noise levels, and traffic congestion?! If you are injured and stuck on the wrong side of the tracks, you could die before getting to the hospital! I believe a traffic impact study needs to be done at PEAK traffic times (Monday – Friday when school is in session and people are making their normal day to day commute: 6:00-900 AM and 2:30 –6:30 PM).

Our home is on a well system. Who can assure us that our water will not be affected negatively? No one can guarantee that there will not be chemical spills, trains jumping tracks, car accidents, pedestrian accidents, etc. I pay what I consider a huge amount in property taxes. When a commuter train goes through a community, it improves the property values. It is something that the real estate professional and the towns themselves advertise as a plus (especially in today's economy). So, it is understandable that the surrounding communities are so hot to have this acquisition go through. Their communities could then benefit from just the short and beneficial commuter trains, while we take on the burden of the long, (toxic) rail cars! My property value will decrease dramatically, however, I'm quite positive that I will not see a reduction in my taxes. It is unfair to have this as a rail only line! I encourage you to look at the ethnic & economic make-up of the people in along the EJ&E line (Waukegan, Mundelein, Aurora, Bartlett, Joliet). I am sure that it looks quite different than the status of people from the towns that will receive all of the benefits by proposed acquisition. I am also curious to know the difference in the density of the population and their proximity to the tracks between the existing lines, and that of the new proposed lines by CN. My guess is it would appear that once again money speaks!

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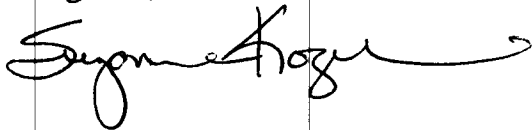
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I am strongly opposed to this buy out. It unfairly puts the burden of the rail lines on us, while we receive absolutely NO BENEFITS.

I am all for business being efficient and making a profit. HOWEVER, it should not be allowed at the expense of the consumer. (Especially if it is for a foreign business that will benefit and we will only be negatively impacted). Please tell me if I missed out on HOW this is going to benefit ME and those that live around me?

Regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Suzanne Kagebein", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.