



THE VILLAGE OF FRANKLIN PARK

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03224 030508. PRITCHETT, LOCL 60131.X.N.

The Honorable Anne K. Quinlan, Esq.
Acting Secretary
Surface Transportation Board
Office of the Secretary
395 E Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20423-0001

Dear Acting Secretary Quinlan,

My name is Daniel B. Pritchett. I am the current Village President of Franklin Park, IL, a community just east and a little south of Chicago's O'Hare airport. I am writing to encourage the Surface Transportation Board to carefully consider all the potential benefits to the region that the purchase of the Elgin, Joliet & Eastern Railway by Canadian National Railway Company will bring.

Over the past five or more years, a locally-sponsored surface transportation initiative that has both regional and national significance has been underway. The Chicago Region Environmental And Transportation Efficiency program (CREATE) is a public/private partnership, with the railroads, the state of Illinois, and the City of Chicago as participants. The program has been actively pursuing solutions to improve the efficiency of the Chicagoland rail system, which serves as the hub to our nation's rail system. One-third of the nation's freight rail traffic flows through the region daily. About 1,200 trains (freight, commuter and passenger) pass through the area daily. The industry employs over 38,000 personnel, with an annual payroll exceeding \$1.7 billion.

Over the next 20 years, transportation analysts project that this region's need for freight service is expected to double. While CREATE is designed to increase the efficiency of all train movements throughout the area, the project that was initially estimated at nearly \$1.5 billion requires a large amount of public money in order to be implemented. Similar to the O'Hare International Airport expansion program finally underway after years of delay, which is designed to aid in the handling of passengers, CREATE must be implemented in order to maintain the Chicago region as the transportation hub of the U.S.

Surface Transportation Board

CN-EJ&E EIS - FD-35087

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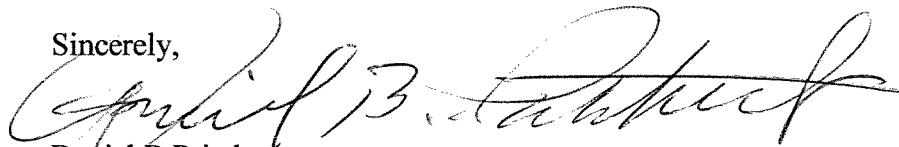
HDR

The proposed purchase of the little-used Elgin, Joliet & Eastern Railway by Canadian National Railway Company is not only within the scope of CREATE's vision, but can be done outside of that program, notably with CN's money, not taxpayers' monies, which will have the added benefit of quickly providing some freight congestion relief while CREATE continues to move ahead with the currently available funding to resolve even more freight transportation congestion issues.

As Village President of my community, I see on a daily basis the effects of rail usage on already over-taxed tracks. Franklin Park recently completed a grade separation project at Grand Avenue in town, and put together a funding package from state, federal, village, and several railroads, which has already improved rail and vehicular efficiencies in the area. The communities now voicing local concerns should also examine the regional impact on all of the Chicagoland communities and should be willing to participate in the ultimate resolution. A successful implementation of CN's acquisition will be an important addition towards improving the region's rail system, and is something that is poised to begin immediately, without taxpayers paying the brunt of it.

Please consider this as a very viable project, one in keeping with sound public policies, that will result in a more efficient rail freight transportation system than we currently have in the region. We look to you to provide sound guidance in ways to address our increasingly congested freight transportation system in the Chicagoland area, especially when the resolution is to be funded by the private sector

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Daniel B. Pritchett", written over a horizontal line.

Daniel B. Pritchett
Village President, Franklin Park, IL
CREATE Task Force Co-Chair

Cc: Ms. Victoria Rutson, Chief, Section of Environmental Analysis
Ms. Phillis Johnson-Ball, Deputy Chief, Section of Environmental Analysis