

**Barrington Area Library**

505 N. Northwest Highway
Barrington, IL 60010-3399

Yours for life

September 18, 2008

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

RE: STB Finance Docket No. 35087

Dear Ms. Johnson-Ball:

As one of the local governments to be significantly impacted by the potential sale of the Elgin, Joliet & Eastern (EJ&E) railroad, the Board of Trustees of the Barrington Public Library District urges the Surface Transportation Safety Board to consider the serious issues raised by the Barrington community as you consider the sale of this railroad line to Canadian National Railroad.

The one building of the Barrington Public Library District (the "Barrington Area Library") draws its patrons from all or part of 14 communities covering 72 square miles. Over 26,500 patron visits per month make the Barrington Area Library one of the most trafficked buildings in the Village of Barrington. The Barrington Area Library opens its facilities on average to about 200 public meetings or performances per month. In addition to those arriving by motor vehicle, many patrons arrive as pedestrians or ride bicycles to our facility.

The library is situated on the east side of Route 14. The library's entrance drive is approximately 850 feet south of the crossing of the EJ&E rail line and Route 14. Although the current building is approximately 1,500 feet from that crossing, approximately 1,700 feet from the Lake Zurich Road railway crossing, and less than 1,200 feet from the rail line, the library intends to construct an addition in the near future. Following construction, the children's wing will be less than 1,000 feet from the rail line. Each summer, the library hosts free outdoor storytimes and other activities for children on its property, as well as storytimes at Citizens' Park and Langendorf Park in the Village of Barrington, both of which are adjacent to the railway. Every year hundreds of children participate in these programs.

The library is concerned that traffic backups, caused by frequent freight trains, will prevent patrons from reaching the library's property safely and conveniently. The library offers patrons many programs, from computer classes to musical performances. Because these trains are so close to our building, the library fears that some patrons--particularly children and teens--will compromise

their safety by trying to beat a train. Recent deaths of pedestrians by trains in our community indicate that this is a real concern.

The library is also concerned about the increased pollution that will be generated as a result of increased freight train traffic. As the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) recognized, increased freight train traffic will snarl automobile traffic throughout Barrington. The increased length of freight trains will cause severe motor vehicle congestion on Route 14 in front of the library. The DEIS also recognized that there will be an increase in pollution from idling automobile engines. Already the Chicago area experiences several Ozone Action Days per summer, in which the young, the elderly, and those with pulmonary problems or asthma are told to remain indoors. The proposed sale will therefore further constrain the library's ability to hold outdoor programs for children in the summer.

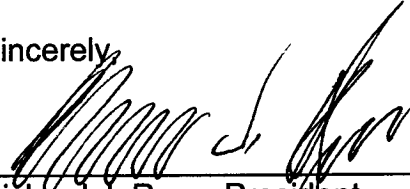
The increase in noise from train whistles will adversely affect the library and the use of our facility. Train whistles sounded approaching nearby crossings are clearly audible within the library's building in areas used by patrons, and even more so outside on its grounds. The impact of this noise will be even more detrimental to outdoor storytime programs at Citizens' Park and Langendorf Park, both of which abut the rail line. A secondary concern is with the noise generated by the locomotives and freight cars themselves. These sounds can be heard clearly on the library's property and well beyond, even inside of buildings. Such noise is not only disturbing to library patrons, but to area residents as well.

The DEIS does not address adequately these concerns which threaten the library's mission and the quality of life for the people of the Barrington community. There is no provision made to ameliorate the traffic backups at the Route 14 crossing. Moreover, there is no condition that Canadian National Railway do anything to ensure that the nearby crossings remain quiet. The DEIS recommends limiting the number of freight trains during rush hour and diverting them to other times. However, the library is open until 9:00 p.m. during the work week and holds many programs in the evening, after rush hour has ended. Thus, simply concentrating train traffic to hours other than rush hour will not resolve the problems as they affect the library.

Finally, as the Village of Barrington Police and Fire Departments have pointed out, the public safety concerns for this community are enormous. Because our facility draws a large number of patrons of all ages, medical emergencies do arise at our library. A patron that becomes ill at the library will have the benefit of a quick paramedic response; however, there will be no way to quickly transport a patient from our facility to Good Shepherd Hospital when a train has blocked every intersection in the Village. A detour to a hospital much farther south of our community could have deadly consequences and is simply unacceptable.

The library requests the Surface Transportation Safety Board to reconsider the impact of the proposed sale on the Barrington Area Library in particular, and the Barrington community as a whole, and to amend the Environmental Impact Report to address these concerns and to suggest means for resolving them. If you have any further questions about our concerns, please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,



Richard J. Ryan, President
Board of Library Trustees
Barrington Public Library District

RJR:bo'g

cc: Karen Darch, President, Village of Barrington
Robert G. Abboud, President, Village of Barrington Hills
H. Scott Gifford, President, Village of Deer Park
Kevin Richardson, President, Village of Lake Barrington
Bruce Sauer, President, Village of North Barrington
Frank Munao Jr. President, Village of South Barrington
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Sen. Richard J. Durbin
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Rep. Ed Sullivan