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Docket #: -35087 --

Subject: * NO CN RAILWAY
First Name: * Joanna
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Group/Affiliation:

Message: Attached is a letter opposing the acquisition of EJ&J Railway by CN Railway Co.
Docket #35087

September 20, 2008

Surface Transportation Board
395 E. Street, SW
Washington, DC 20423

Attn: Phillis Johnson-Ball

Re: STB Finance Docket No. 35087

Ms. Johnson-Ball;

I am writing in response to the meeting informing local residents of the Canadian National Railway Company acquisition of the EJ&E Railway Company. I stand beside my fellow community members when I say my concerns with this acquisition lie mainly with the safety issues surrounding the residents of Frankfort and nearby communities. As a lifelong resident of Frankfort whose childhood home backs up to the train tracks, I am concerned with the quality of life of those who reside in the homes along the path of the EJ&E, specifically my parents who have planned on living their golden years in the same home where they have lived the past 30 years. I know you don't need a hundred heartfelt letters in reference to this acquisition, but I don't understand how the nearby residents and their homes can simply be ignored.

My parents are a simple married couple in their pre-retirement years. We consider ourselves your typical middle class, suburban family of four working hard for our earnings to enjoy the life we created in what was once a sleepy, small suburban town called Frankfort. However, we aren't exactly typical. My mom has suffered a spinal-cord injury more than 30 years ago and is restricted to a wheelchair. They have been through family members questioning whether getting married was the best thing to do because Mom is disabled, as well as the numerous struggles and difficulties and surgeries and hospitalizations that go along with being a paraplegic all the while successfully raising two children. They persevered and celebrated their 43rd wedding anniversary last fall.

Not being able to walk requires many lifestyle and living adjustments. My parents found a home nearly 30 years ago that would be accommodating for my mom with help from my handy father adding ramps, chair lifts, bathroom adaptations, ever-fixing motorized wheelchairs and replacing batteries; basically anything needed to make everyday living as simple as possible for Mom. This home where they have built their life lies about 150 feet away from the EJ&E Railroad tracks in Frankfort. The same tracks the Canadian National Railway may soon be rolling along. Growing up near the EJ&E tracks was only mildly irritating, especially while trying to conduct business over the telephone while a train was traveling through. But as kids we would count the number of cars in one to maybe five or six trains a day. With CN Railways proposed acquisition of EJ&E, they will begin with as many as 30 trains a day; more than one train every hour of every day. Not only will noise pollution be the top concern, air pollution and safety issues are at the top of the list with the hazardous materials constantly rolling along behind our homes. The safety issues are too numerous to mention.

The massive increase in the number of trains, and their length, rolling through our towns brings with it numerous safety and health factors. Aside from the obvious noise pollution, which makes it difficult to enjoy an afternoon outdoors with family and friends and nearly impossible to conduct business via telephone during open window months, there also lies the problem of air pollution.

With the many health issue that arise based on a variety of things from what we eat to what we breathe, (Thank you Illinois for the statewide smoking ban.) the 30-something trains a day expected with this acquisition are sure to be releasing damaging pollutants into our air every hour of every day.

Active families in our community enjoy time outdoors whether it is biking, walking or visiting with neighbors. The addition of the CN Railway trains traveling through Frankfort will only hurt the quality of living in a town where, as a lifelong resident, I am among many who enjoy life outdoors in any season.

What happens when emergency vehicles are delayed arriving to an accident or heading to the hospitals? When a house or industrial fire erupts nearby, what happens when the additional fire engines from neighboring communities can't get through because it will take too long to arrive at a burning home or company. Many lives could quite possibly be at stake in several different scenarios due to slow moving, extra long trains carrying hazardous material every hour of the day. Local schools hosting various activities from conferences to athletics may be in need of assistance from police, firefighters or medical technicians; children and families lives could be at risk because the ambulance could not make it to the hospital in time because they were stopped by a CN train.

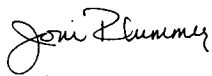
The health issues aren't the only safety concerns. With the additional trains carrying extra heavy, hazardous loads, the nearby homes shake and rattle as each train rolls by. This will cause structural damage to homes causing homeowners more problems and costing them their hard-earned dollars in repairs; not to mention the devaluation of their property while property taxes continue to rise.

With the constant shaking and rumbling of the ground as trains pass through, what happens when the high tension wires, telephone poles and streetlights loosen and threaten to fall? What will happen to Commonwealth Edison's new electrical sub-station that sits next to the train tracks in Frankfort?

The CN Railway acquisition of EJ&E Railway Company certainly is NOT for the betterment of our community. If anything, it may be the downfall of a wonderful "Town with 1890's Charm".

Thank you for your time,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Joanna Plummer".

Joanna Plummer
19815 Edinburgh Lane
Frankfort, IL 60423
jonip13@aol.com