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Docket No. 35087

Canadian National Purchase of EJ&E

To:

Surface Transportation Board
Attn: Ms. Victoria J. Rutson, Chief, Section of Environmental Analysts
395 E. Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20423-0001

Surface Transportation Board

CN-EJ&E EIS - FD-35087

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Subject: Canadian National purchase of EJ&E - Docket No. 35087

1/25/2008

Dear Ms. Victoria J. Rutson,

I have been well aware of Canadian National Railway to purchase and invest \$100M, in the next 3 years, in the EJ&E Line. This will increase average number of trains flowing between Indiana and Joliet from 6.4 to 28.3/day according to paperwork filed with the Surface Transportation Board. Average amount of tons shipped per day between Matteson and Joliet would jump from 35,375 to 226,994. The surge in the number of cars carrying hazardous materials with more than 400 each year rolling on the EJ&E, an increase of more than 350 percent. All reported by the Southtown Star Newspaper.

Below I will address safety and environmental concerns with the Canadian National Railway purchase of the EJ&J. I will also site a disaster concern that I hope will never happen to the Frankfort and Will County communities. I will end with my own conclusions on this purchase.

Safety Concerns

I live within a half mile of the current rail line. There are no crossing arms on the 116th street intersection. This is a safety issue already for 6.4 trains/day. At minimum, quad gates will be required to keep our community safe. Grade separated crossings would greatly reduce the risk of potential safety liabilities. The stress of train crossings by idle motorist will also increase the risk of accidents. Motorists will try to beat train crossings or speed away after trains have passed to make up lost time waiting for train crossings. Other concerns are traffic jams from trains blocking roads. This will lead to police, firefighters and paramedics unable to reach the other side of town because of crawling locomotives. Patients dying in ambulances after the drivers cannot reach hospitals in time. The splitting of our community support for police, fire department and medical may require Frankfort to separate facilities. This in turn will increase staff to support the community under current crossing conditions. Between Illinois 394 in Saulk Village and Orchard Drive in Park Forest, a distance of about six miles, no tunnels or bridges are in place to get traffic over or under the EJ&E when trains are running.

Environmental Concerns

I am highly concerned about the Environmental impact on the increase number, weight and length of trains by the Canadian National Railway on the Frankfort and Will County communities. Idling motor vehicles, waiting on roads while longer trains pass will put more noise and smog pollution in the air. This and the addition of larger locomotive train pollution is a major concern. Idling trains on the second track will cause more of the same issue. There are no sound barriers currently. Currently 6.4 trains per day is barely acceptable, 28.3 trains per day is unacceptable. I am not interested in hearing the constant rumble of more trains along with their long whistles! Quad gates will be required at crossings to keep the long whistle noise down 24 hours/ 7 Days a week. There are no earth barriers or sound deflectors currently in place to reduce noise pollution for longer, heavier and more frequent trains. There is also no protection to the natural wildlife in the event of a derailment or turnover of hazardous material carrying freight cars. The increased train traffic alone is a major impact to the ecosystem. Containment of derailed or turned over hazardous material carrying freight cars in the form of run off or diked off areas to protect wildlife will be needed.

CSX Line – Lake County Ohio Train Derailment

Below is an example of a recent derailment on a train line in Lake County Ohio. The CSX line in Lake County Ohio averages just over 30 trains per day. This is an example of a situation that I would not like to put my family through or the residents of Will County.

October 11, 2007 a train derailment in Lake County Ohio on the CSX line caused the evacuation of 1,300 residents from up to ½ mile away. Around 12 freight cars caught fire. It was a 112-car freight train. Eight of the freight cars on fire contained ethanol, liquid petroleum and phtalic anhydride. One tanker contained liquid petroleum, 30,000 gallons. The fire required some 250 firefighters from 30 departments. The three-mile section of the line remained down for over 3 days, roads as well. Residents were evacuated for over 3 days from their homes. Concern was also for wildlife. Run off into the ground and into streams were of high concern by the EPA and local wildlife management groups.

Conclusion

There is zero value to the residents of Frankfort or to Will County in regards to adding more trains to this line. Rail Congestion leads to road congestion in Frankfort and in Will County. There are many safety and environmental issues addressed above that provide negative value. There is no benefit to our community or my family.

Sincerely,

Gale Murphy
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Frankfort, IL 60423

