

9/19/08

Re: CN acquisition of EJ & E Railroad

To Whom It May Concern:

I am **STRONGLY OPPOSED** to the CN acquisition of the EJ & E Rail Line for **MANY reasons**. **First and foremost is for the safety of our children**. Our district recently went through a re-boundarying of school lines. We moved into our neighborhood in large part **for the high school we thought our kids would go to**. With our schools bursting at the seams, our district was forced to re-draw the boundary lines and there are now thousands of homes zoned to be going to a different high school starting this next school year. The school happens to be over the train tracks -- directly, and unavoidably over the train tracks. **This is not a small school; the enrollment is over 3500**. We're looking at hundreds of kids bussed over the tracks everyday, not to mention all the student drivers, **many of them who've just started driving, all with a sense of invincibility ("I don't want to miss the bell, I can avoid those closing train gates if I just gun it")**. And it's not just to and from class. **It's all day with team sports, after school activities, school dances, etc**. Forty-two trains a day and hundreds of kids crossing the tracks. Not a good mix.

The access to the school from our neighborhood is limited. It is my understanding that the CN trains will be up to two miles long, which will mean unreasonable waits at the gates. **People commuting to work, and students rushing to school only need to get stuck once waiting for a train, and they will be that much more likely to try to beat the train the next time**. With the current 16 trains a day, many at night, **it's not that hard to plan your commute around the train schedule**. Make that 42 trains a day, and it becomes impossible to avoid them, and impossible to avoid the safety risks.

Our train crossings were not built to handle the volume that the CN rail line will bring. It is my understanding that the towns will bear the burden of updating them. We already live in one of the highest taxed cities around. I have had to go back to work full-time in order to pay my property taxes and our family is definitely feeling the stress of the recession. I can't imagine the impact new rail crossings might bring.

The impact on our home values will be devastating. We deliberated long and hard before moving to Naperville. We chose our home for the schools and the neighborhood. It's one thing to choose a neighborhood when you know there's a railroad with limited activity. We would NOT have chosen to move here with a railroad as busy as the CN / EJ& J promises to be. **You will be irreparably changing the landscape of a peaceful, homey community**. With the bottomed out housing market, were we to sell our home right now, we would barely break even. Fortunately, we're not currently planning to sell because we're happy. But I would feel much differently should the acquisition go through, and I shudder to think how our home value would plummet, and how difficult it would be to sell it then.

Going back to the safety issue – the closest hospital to our neighborhood is over the train tracks. **With trains two miles in length, forty-two times a day, that makes emergency response a game of Russian roulette. Ambulances would have to be diverted to a hospital three times farther.**

You may not care about my happiness, or my tax situation, or my home value, but surely, **if you have a conscience, you must care about the safety of people's lives.**

With Sincere Thanks for Reading This, and For Your Thoughtful Consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'CMartin'.

Claudia Martin
Naperville Resident

2524 Saddlebrook Drive
Naperville IL 60564
630 922-6855