

CITY OF CREST HILL

Nick E. Churnovic
Mayor

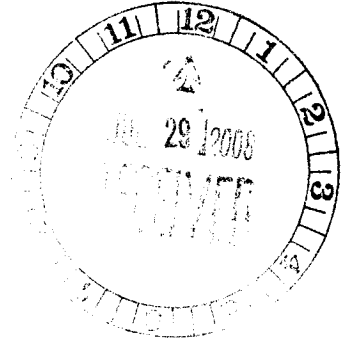
Mark A. Spiezio
City Treasurer

Christine Vershay-Hall
City Clerk



July 17, 2008

Anne K. Quinlan
Acting Secretary
Surface Transportation Board
395 E. Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20423-0001



RE: Canadian National Railway Company and Grand Trunk Corporation-Control-EJ&E West Company (STB Finance Docket No. 35087)

Dear Ms. Quinlan:

I am writing to express persistent and deep concerns about the Canadian National Railway Company's (CN) proposed acquisitions of the Elgin, Joliet and Eastern Railway Company (EJ&E). We appreciate the manner in which the STB has been attentive to the comment and input of the communities and other stakeholders in the Chicagoland area. We look forward to continuing to work with you.

The City of Crest Hill has more than 19,000 residents, and the potential acquisition of the railway could have a negative impact on our entire community. Two of Crest Hill's major roads, Gaylord and Oakland Avenue, intersect the EJ&E line with at-grade crossings. In its proposal to purchase the EJ&E Railway, CN estimates there will be an increase in the number of trains traveling through Crest Hill, from 19 to 42 each day. If this occurs, it will increase response times of emergency vehicles, create more noise pollution for residents who live near the railroad tracks, contribute to increased traffic congestion, and increase a hazardous materials risk.

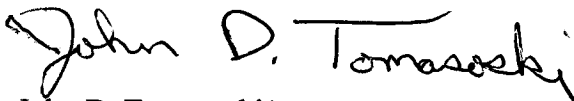
In order to provide a thoughtful and considered review of the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), we are requesting that the comment period be a minimum of 120 days. For ours and other communities, a 45-day comment period would be inadequate to address the volume and depth of issues that will be addressed in the EIS. Indeed, the great variety of affected communities and entities will require significant resources to devote the appropriate attention and care to the draft EIS as it affects them. A 120-day comment period would allow for adequate due diligence by local governments to represent their constituents responsibly, and the unprecedented public interest and participation in this proceeding warrants an extended comment period.

We would also like to register our concern with CN's safety record. The Canadian Parliament's Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities issued a report on rail safety in Canada on May 29, 2008. The report cited many concerns with CN including its management's inattentiveness to the safety concerns of frontline workers, contributing to a "culture of fear" within CN that made employees reluctant to report safety violations. Also, CN received the lowest rating among its peers for implementing Safety Management Systems. We encourage you to consider the gravity of these issues, and the potential impact of CN dramatically increasing operations on a line that traverses neighborhoods and runs near parks, schools and economic centers.

Regarding the Board's determination to extend the time horizon of rail traffic projections to 2015, we remain concerned. We appreciate the Board's effort to take a broader look at the affects of the acquisition. Nonetheless, a view limited at 2015 is inadequate. Transportation projects are planned and funded by federal, state, and local authorities based on long-term projections of growth and changing demand; indeed, to be considered a worthy and responsible use of precious public resources, such a long-term view must be considered. We hope the Board will see fit to hold CN to the same standards that those of us stewarding public resources are.

Further, we urge the Board to reconsider the viability of CREATE as an alternative to the EJ&E acquisition. CREATE is a public-private partnership that took a great deal of effort to arrange. The region's stakeholders identified this plan, a major \$1.5 billion effort, to relieve congestion and enhance mobility in the region. It is premature to forego CREATE given the concerted thought and effort that the region's stakeholders committed to formulating the CREATE program. We hope the Board will consider the local labor that has been invested.

Thank you for your continued consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John D. Tomasoski". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

John D. Tomasoski
City Administrator