

November 22, 2007

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

Dear Ms. Rutson:

We are residents of Barrington, Illinois. Our family has made its home here for 20 years, the most recent nine of which have been in our home that is 300 yards from one of the sets of railroad tracks that run through Barrington. We recently heard that Canadian National Railway Company had proposed an acquisition of the closest set of tracks, what we refer to as the Elgin-Joliet (EJ&E) rail line, which would quadruple the train traffic on those tracks. We further understand that this estimate did not account for large increases that were announced to CN's shareholders that the company expects train traffic on that line to increase sharply from even those levels over the next 20 years. If true, this news is disastrous to the health and quality of life and living environment for our family, our neighbors and our town.

We couldn't begin to count the number of times we cross the EJ&E tracks every day, or how essential that passage is for work, shopping, school activities, and other reasons that make our community unique, but there are some other considerations that we believe are compelling to consider.

Specifically:

- One of the primary reasons that we live in Barrington is so my children attend the **Barrington public schools**; each of them ride buses that have to cross the EJ&E tracks to attend class. My understanding is that Barrington school buses cross the EJ&E tracks some 400 times per day, and our area has been the sad witness to the lives of school children being killed in bus/train accidents. Quite apart from the danger, the additional freight traffic will bring our village to a standstill for an additional estimated 90 – 120 minutes per day, which will paralyze all surface traffic (including school buses, carrying the most valuable "freight" of all).
- The EJ&E tracks essentially bisect our town, which makes the possibility of additional delays particularly troublesome as they could relate to **emergency services**. From our home, an ambulance would not have to cross the rail line to get to the emergency room, but a fire truck or a police car would have to cross the tracks if my home was on fire or being burglarized. Having such a profound impact on the availability of basic emergency services for every resident in our

- town would seem reason enough to prevent the additional freight traffic through Barrington.
- We have made a special commitment to Barrington, as both of us own **businesses that are headquartered here**. The additional traffic on the rail line, and the resultant paralysis of local traffic, will unquestionably undermine our ability to attract clients and customers and to conduct business, and the value of our businesses will decline. We all enjoy the benefits of interstate commerce, but it is inequitable that their interstate commerce should automatically trump ours. The inability of Barrington residents to even support local businesses, let alone the people coming in from out of the community, could have a devastating effect on the local economy.
 - On the northeast edge of the village of Barrington, the EJ&E tracks cut through the middle Cuba Marsh, which is part of the Lake County Forest Preserve. It is a highly unique spot, with a combination of wetlands, dense woods and prairie. It is a beautiful resource for all Lake County residents, but particularly for those living in the close communities of Barrington, Lake Zurich and Deer Park. As with any protected wetland, we understand from local naturalists that there are a number of unique species of plants and animals in Cuba Marsh, including **endangered species**. One of those plants, called a marsh pennywort (*Hydrocotyle vulgaris*) is on the endangered list as it appears only two places in the State of Illinois; Vermillion County near Danville and Cuba Marsh. Additional train traffic or, worse, additional train tracks, would inevitably disrupt the natural environment of Cuba Marsh and could threaten these endangered species. For all who consider ourselves to be stewards of the environment, such a disruption is an unacceptable outrage.

I have been informed that you are responsible for reviewing Canadian National Railway Company's proposal. I think that the effects I discussed above warrant serious consideration before you allow Canadian National to move forward. You hold the safety and well-being of not only our family, but that of an entire region in your hands. I trust that you and the rest of the Board will thoroughly review Canadian National's proposal for any and all effects on the environment and affected communities. Please do not approve this proposal until you are certain that local commerce, safety of our school children, complexion of our community, and even wild life and wild plants, will not suffer.

Sincerely,

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