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1/9/08

To: Surface Transportation Board

From: Stephen Miller 549 North Ave., Barrington IL

Subject: Environmental Impact Study

I am writing my concerns regarding the purchase of the E, J & E line by Canadian National as both a concerned citizen and as a Village Trustee of the Village of Barrington Board. I will start by addressing the concerns of all of our communities that this purchase and subsequent change in use will cause.

Safety is the number one public trust and the increase in use of this line will create increases in safety hazards

- All of our track crossings are at grade. There are a total of 4 crossings that totally divide our community all within a square mile. There are no alternate routes in this area to avoid these tracks. Our police and fire department are located on one side of these tracks. A 7500-10000 ft long train will block all of these intersections at one time. While we have multiple fire houses they are farther away and reaction time for both fire and police will be extended. This creates an environment that will reduce response time for police to a crime or support, the possibility of homes being lost to fire or unnecessary damage, and above all our paramedic's ability to deliver a trauma patient to our hospital (where we just invested in a cardio center). In these situations, seconds make the difference in life and death situations!
- 375 school busses and over 25-30,000 cars (based on a study done for the Village Comprehensive plan) pass over these tracks per weekday. As congestion is increased, people will increase poor decision making and put themselves at risk to beat trains across the tracks. We are neighbors to a community who lost 7 children in 1995 who were on a school bus hit by a train and this is an incident we do not want to live through again.
- A good number of children in Barrington walk to school and have to cross these tracks. Specifically, the high school kids will risk beating on coming freight trains across the tracks when they realize they are looking at 9-12 minutes of waiting.
- 62 Metra/Union Pacific trains (plus additional freight runs) also run at grade. In the center of our community the E, J, & E tracks intersect with the Metra/Union Pacific tracks. Just like the FAA limits the number of planes landing and taking off, this needs to be a serious consideration where trains full of people and freight trains full of materials

(including hazardous materials) are running across each other's paths on a daily basis. Increases at this grade crossing will create an inevitable problem or collision.

Currently, we have two state highways, one county highway, a commuter train line and the E, J, & E line all **intersecting each other in less than one square mile**. The following are other concerns that this increase in congestion will cause

- The Village of Barrington, business owners and citizens have made enormous investments in revitalizing commerce in our downtown and Hwy 14 corridor. The economic impact of this increased train traffic will be catastrophic in attracting new business and development. Whenever we lose a business or they move, they point to **current** train traffic levels and the gridlock caused on our streets as hurting their business. People from outlying areas have told us they don't come downtown as much due to the traffic and trains. This increase in congestion will not only make it difficult to attract new business, it will also cause a decrease in current business growth and inevitable closing of some current businesses.
- Our communities (the Barrington governments in a 20 mile area) have invested heavily in making our surrounding area not only attractive and open; we have worked very hard at protecting and developing wetlands, invested in a new 55 acre park and implemented conservation in wildlife and water resources. This line runs directly through a large portion of these areas, which would be directly affected by this increase in train traffic and potential exposure to toxic chemical spills that could affect the environment and our shallow aquifers that supply the whole area with water. These areas will also be affected by additional noise, vibration and emissions (from both the trains and cars that have to sit idle).
- Structures that were located near the tracks were constructed without consideration for heavy 1.5-2 mile loaded trains running constantly by them. The noise and vibration that will be caused by these types of trains will create unforeseen damage to properties.
- As for me personally, my wife and I own a home 75-80 yards from the intersection of the E, J & E and Hwy. 14. We have lived here for 16 years and when we purchased the property we inquired about the train traffic. To date it has remained the same (3-5 trains per day) and while we would prefer no trains, we have grown used to dealing with the occasional train whistles, noise and vibration. However, not only are we looking at an increase in number of trains but also the type of trains. Currently most trains are very short in length and this set of tracks has been used as a "relocating" cars or engines for larger uses. We are facing longer trains with full loads that will be a significant change in noise and vibration both in magnitude and frequency!

My company purchases products that are delivered from the coast via train container cars. I understand “progress and change” but this **isn't equivalent** to putting another runway at O'Hare that was and is an international airport. This is equivalent to turning a single prop airport into an international airport that is located next to another busy airport. CN will soft sell this as reducing traffic through more crowded areas and only running a small increase through our area. However, one only has to listen to the CEO's press conference discussing this purchase and it is obvious that they will want to double track this section of line and use it as a high volume line. The dollar figures and growth he is quoting from the port in Canada spell nothing but high use.

As the governing board, please consider their long term goals when reviewing the impact on our area and also be sure to they hold to their word when quoting reductions, increases and mitigation.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephen Miller". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'S' and 'M'.

Stephen Miller

Village Trustee, father & citizen