



Environmental Impact Statement

Scoping Comment for the Proposed Canadian National Railway Company Acquisition of the Elgin, Joliet and Eastern Railway Company STB Finance Docket No. 35087

Comment Form

How Do I Submit Comments?

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- **Written Comments:** Complete and submit this form at the public open house scoping meeting, or follow the directions on the reverse side of this sheet to mail your comments.
- **Recorded Comments:** Provide your comments to a member of the project team or court reporter at this public open house scoping meeting, or call the toll-free project information line: 1-800-347-0689.
- **Electronic Comments:** Submit electronic comments by visiting the Surface Transportation Board's website, www.stb.dot.gov, under the heading "E-Filing."

Please refer to STB Finance Docket No. 35087 in all correspondence addressed to the Surface Transportation Board. Comments must be submitted by February 1, 2008.

I agree very strongly with the enclosed. Please do NOT endanger our health and safety and cause all of the other serious problems.

*Thank you,
Beverly Halvorsen
I was one of the 1600 at the meeting*

Surface Transportation Board

CN-EJ&E EIS - FD-35087

What scoping meeting did you attend? (Please print) _____ Mundelein, Barrington, Joliet, Matteson, Gary, West Chicago, Chicago.

Date Rec'd: _____ Name: _____

HDR File No. _____ Address: _____

YOUR INPUT IS IMPORTANT!

Comments provided by the public help determine the scope of the environmental review.

Scanned (Initial): _____

STAECT #: _____ City, State, Z _____

Co: Original - Job File Date: _____

H

Beverly Halvorsen
523 Woodview Rd Apt B
Lk Barrington IL 60010-1768

*1/18/08
I've lived in Lake Barrington Shore for 33 years and would hate to see this happen to our area*

GUESTESSAY

MICHAEL DEERING

Our health and safety is getting railroaded

Michael Deering is director of communications at Advocate Good Shepherd Hospital.

People who work in healthcare and medicine — particularly in trauma and emergency medicine — derive great satisfaction from helping desperately sick and injured people in our communities. It's not a job to them so much as it is a calling. They love what they do, and their first priority is to do what's right for their patients.

That's why at Advocate Good Shepherd Hospital we're so concerned about the Canadian National Railway's plans to purchase the EJ&E line and run some 29 trains through the heart of the Barrington communities each day. There will be significantly negative consequences. This is the most important issue that this community has faced, and it will forever change the character of our town. We're not exaggerating when we say, lives can — and very likely will be lost through this proposition.

Good Shepherd is a Level II Trauma Center, and that means that we handle all but the most dire cases. Our emergency department handled 750 serious trauma cases last year. Approximately a third of ambulance runs from the area to Good Shepherd originated on the other side of the EJ&E tracks. A trauma patient has what's called the "golden hour," from the time of significant injury to treatment. This is the window of opportunity when their chances of survival are best.

Many trauma cases are vehicle collisions, and as you know, it takes an accident to be responded to, police and fire teams to arrive, assess the victims, work to extricate them, and call for an ambulance. The victims are then transported here, all while the golden hour's clock is ticking. It often leaves our doctors, surgeons and trauma nurses with precious little time on their side to treat the victims in the "golden hour." If their ambulance sits waiting for an extra 10 to 15 minutes for a freight train, their lives are compromised. If they're hemorrhaging, they could very well bleed out waiting for the tracks to clear. They'll be literally hemmed in by these rolling barriers, unable to reach the hospital west- or northbound through town.

And, Illinois law states that for Good Shepherd to serve as a trauma center, its surgeons and specialists must be able to arrive within 30

minutes of a trauma. If the physicians are on the wrong side of the tracks, they will not be able to arrive in time to help.

Members of our ER are all too familiar with another danger posed by train traffic. Many were here in October 1995, working to save the lives of Fox River Grove children after a train tore through their school bus, killing seven and seriously injuring 24. It was heartbreaking, and they'll never forget it. The Barrington School Board reports that school buses cross the EJ&E line nearly 400 times per day.

Heart disease is the number one killer in Illinois, and the reason we established our outstanding, state-of-the-art cardiac care center, considered by many to be the finest in the region. If a person has a heart attack in downtown Barrington, they're just 10 minutes from Good Shepherd's ER and cardiac center. But, if their ambulance's path is blocked by a freight train, they're 13 miles and 23 minutes from Northwest Community and 12 miles and 22 minutes from Sherman – the next two closest accessible hospitals with comprehensive cardiac capability.

If the victim is in cardiac arrest, it's a fact that every minute treatment is delayed, it increases the likelihood of mortality by 10 percent. If they wait just five minutes for a freight train to pass – as CN representatives at the hearing boasted would be the best case scenario – the victim faces a 50/50 proposition that they're not going to see another day. This is to say nothing of the fact that paramedics might not even be able to reach many of our citizens, who'll now find themselves literally on the wrong side of the tracks. If the best case is that CN's 1.5 mile-long trains only take five minutes to cross six Barrington intersections, the proposed 29 trains will block our roads for two hours and 40 minutes of every day.

Many in the emergency room can look back to instances when Barrington women arrived by car just in time to give birth in the ER. Babies were even delivered in our parking lot as they pulled up. Imagine how long 10 minutes will feel parked in front of crossing gates while experiencing full contractions. And, the CN's plan is to run more than one train on the average of every hour of the day and night through the heart of our town.

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ESSAY

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There's also the issue of asthma. Just in 2006, our emergency room cared for 140 asthmatic attack patients, the majority of them, children. With the quadrupling of locomotives literally in people's backyards, we'll get an intimate understanding of why many environ-

mentalists refer to them as "smokestacks on rails." Diesel locomotives are the single largest source of fine particu-

late matter in the United States; it's one of the top triggers for asthmatics. The increase in air pollution will result in more asthma attacks. And, asthma kills. The irony is that the very rail traffic that causes more asthma attacks in children may also be the same freight trains

that bar them from reaching the hospital in time. That's a frightening one-two punch for their safety.

In its own application, CN insists this transaction "will have no adverse safety effects." Considering the realities, Advocate Good Shepherd Hospital respectfully disagrees. This community faces very real public health and safety threats from the Canadian National Railway.

1,600 say no way to railway

By MATT KIEFER

Staff Writer

mkiefer@pioneerlocal.com

An estimated 1,600 people flocked to Makray Memorial Golf Club in Barrington to air their concerns about a proposed railroad deal that would roll more freight trains through outlying suburbs along the Elgin, Joliet & Eastern Railway.

Residents of Barrington and surrounding communities packed the Jan. 9 public meeting called by the Surface Transportation Board, the federal agency that will review and rule on Canadian National's proposal to purchase the railway from Union Pacific and add more freight traffic to it.

Canadian National estimates some communities along the EJ&E could see between 15 and 26 more trains each day — well above the current average of 5.

Other train lines, in turn, would carry fewer trains. The North Central Line to the east would see its average of 19 freights per day drop to just 2.

Opponents to the plan were out in full force.

A coalition group of local governments, Barrington Communities Against CN Rail Congestion, provided meeting attendees with signs that read, "People before freight." The group purchased 5,000 yard-signs and 1,000 business signs, and could not hand them out fast enough to the residents who lined up to grab them by the stack.

"I'm concerned about the increase in noise level," said Tracee Patterson, a Barrington resident who came to the

open house with her two children to submit a written statement to the STB. "It's already bad. And the traffic congestion is already horrible if you live in Barrington. Just adding more is hard to imagine."

In addition to drumming up public opposition, the Barrington coalition has also hired legal and public relations firms to represent its collective interests.

Jeff Fedorchak, president of Crosspoint Communications, took a break from handing out signs to the locals to explain what his agency hopes to achieve.

"Our first request to the Surface Transportation Board is to listen to what your community is saying and consider the alternatives," Fedorchak said. He explained the meeting itself represented the first step towards that goal. The STB called for several open houses as part of an environmental impact study, which it agreed to perform in order to consider the pros and cons of the Canadian National deal.

"This is the next phase, and that is, as they go around do their open houses, to hear from people," Fedorchak said. "And they're hearing an awful."

He said there are three possible outcomes of the study: the STB could deny Canadian National's proposed purchase and new freight schedule, approve it, or allow it with certain conditions.

Fedorchak said there are other ways to ease rail congestion in northeast Illinois, citing the CREATE program, a public-private initiative to improve the railroad network

in and around Chicago.

"Everybody agrees we need a comprehensive regional solution that would address this," he said. "There is an alternative here and it's not moving 20 to 30 trains through the suburbs."

The proposal does have some fans in the suburbs, though. Farther east, Buffalo Grove officials have publicly supported the purchase because it would shift freight traffic away from the North Central Line that runs along their community. An electronic newsletter sent out by village government described the move as "great for Buffalo Grove," though it acknowledged that communities along the EJ&E have reason to oppose it. The newsletter urged residents to submit their opinions to the STB.

Communities belonging to Barrington Communities Against CN Rail Congestion — Barrington Hills, South Barrington, North Barrington, Lake Barrington, Deer Park and Tower Lakes and the Barrington and Cuba township — argue that much is at stake with the Canadian National deal. Besides the complaints about noise and traffic congestion, many have expressed concern that more trains will make impact public safety response times.

Howard Hansen, a firefighter with the Barrington Fire Department, said the proposed increase in freight traffic "effectively cuts off" fire and ambulance service from getting to homes and hospitals in time.

"In almost every (emergency medical service) call, seconds matter, let alone minutes," he said.

All the issues raised —

traffic, noise, and safety — will be studied and evaluated as STB staff prepare a draft environmental impact statement, said Victoria Rutson, chief of the board's environmental analysis section.

In addition to doing field research, Rutson said that public comment is "a very important part of the process."

"These people live here every day, so nobody knows their community better than they do," she said.

After the open house, Patricia and David Janes were not so convinced that their opinions would be duly considered. As they took a village-run shuttle bus to an overflow parking lot — Makray's lot was predictably jam-packed — they wondered if the decision to shift freight to the outlying suburbs was a done deal.

"I think (the study) can be lip service because Chicago has so much to gain and we have so much to lose," Patricia said. Anyone interested in submitting comments on the purchase can do so online at www.stb.dot.gov; over the phone at (800) 347-0689; or by mail to Surface Transportation Board, 395 E Street, SW, Washington, DC 20423, attention: Phillis Johnson-Ball, Environmental Filing, STB Finance, indicating docket no. 35087.

Other open house meetings have been scheduled for Jan. 15 in Matteson, Jan. 16 in Gary, Ind., Jan. 17 in West Chicago, and Jan. 22 in Chicago. For more information, visit the Web site or call the information line listed above.

The Web site for Barrington Communities Against CN Rail Congestion is www.fight-trailcongestion.com.