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August 25, 2008

The Honorable Anne K. Quinlan, Acting Secretary  
Surface Transportation Board  
395 E. Street SW  
Washington, DC 20423-001

RE: Docket # 35087  
Canadian National Railway Company & Grand Trunk Corporation - Control - EJ & E West  
Company

Dear Secretary Quinlan:

I am a registered professional nurse who is a resident of Frankfort, Illinois and am concerned about the impact the purchase of the EJ&E Railroad by Canadian National Railway will have on our community and its residents.

The planned increase in the number and length of trains passing through is a major concern, but also is the condition of the existing tracks. My understanding is that they have not been upgraded in over 25 years. Canadian National has made it clear that there are no plans to refurbish the tracks, yet they plan to increase their usage of them carrying more weight and with greater frequency. Projected volume estimates an increase of 400% and, since there is no cap on future usage, we can only anticipate additional increases.

Currently only one road in Frankfort has an overpass on which the trains can travel without crossing at street level. The remaining six are at-grade crossings would be considerably impacted. Traffic delays at train crossings could realistically determine whether or not an ambulance reached a local emergency department in ample time. The safety and welfare of a large portion of our community is in jeopardy. The hospitals that residents of our village are taken to for emergency treatment, Silver Cross and St. James, are both located north of the rail system. At the very least, CN should demonstrate an ethical decision by building overpasses on these critical routes, i.e., Wolf Road and Harlem Ave at a minimum.

I have read the draft Environmental Impact Statement and am concerned that it is not taking into consideration the projected long term growth in our community. Will County is one of the fastest growing counties in the Chicagoland area. Estimates in the study appear to be based on traffic projections through 2015. The Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission estimates Frankfort will have a population of 55,000 in 2030. Your study is significantly flawed if these higher population numbers are not taken into consideration.

Please assure that the final Environmental Impact Study gives adequate consideration to the significant growth projected for our community when considering the acquisition of EJ&E by CN. I am hoping that you will help our community avoid tragedy with potential loss of lives.

Respectfully yours,

  
Dianne M. Patrick, MS, RN