



*Inspiring all learners to
achieve excellence*

Barrington Community
Unit School District 220

BARRINGTON HIGH SCHOOL

BARRINGTON MIDDLE SCHOOLS

Prairie Campus

Station Campus

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Countryside

Grove Avenue

Hough Street

Arnett C. Lines

North Barrington

Barbara B. Rose

Roslyn Road

Sunny Hill

Woodland

Brian G. Battle
President,

CUSD220 School Board

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EJ-3352

November 15, 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:

I am currently President of the School Board for Barrington Community Unit School District 220 in the Barrington, Illinois area. Our School District represents over 40,000 residents, and we educate about 9,200 students each year. Community Unit District 220 encompasses 72 square miles. It covers 12 villages: all of Barrington, Lake Barrington, Tower Lakes; and portions of Barrington Hills, Carpentersville, Deer Park, Fox River Grove, Fox River Valley Gardens, Hoffman Estates, Inverness, North Barrington, and South Barrington. In addition, District 220 is geographically located in 4 Illinois counties: Cook, Lake, McHenry, and Kane. District 220 has one centrally located high school, two centrally located middle school campuses for grades 6-8, eight elementary schools, and one early childhood center.

School District 220 serves a vital purpose in our community by providing a high quality education to our children. Our schools have received many state and national awards for educational achievement. One of the most significant issues facing the parents and children of our School District is the long bus rides endured for many children. The size and geography of our School District make the travel times for buses and cars very long, often approaching one hour each way. Recent efforts by local villages and state authorities have not been able to solve what is widely recognized as a significant traffic problem.

It has come to my attention that Canadian National Railway Company seeks to acquire the Elgin, Joliet, & Eastern Railway Co, which operates a rail line that runs through the Barrington area. I write to urge the Surface Transportation Board to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for this transaction. The proposed transaction will have a significant impact on our ability to get our students from their homes to our facilities. Only the rigorous review required by the EIS process will develop alternatives and mitigation procedures sufficient to limit that impact. This review should include impacts of the transaction further into the future than the three years Canadian National currently estimates.

As an elected public official, I believe that increased rail traffic on the EJ&E line will create significant safety risks for the residents in our community. Over 60% of our school buses need to cross the EJ& E lines several times per day. School buses with children cross the EJ&E rail line nearly 400 times each day. Our area has seen many bus accidents at rail crossings in the last decade. Given the location of the EJ&E railway in our community, the increased rail traffic contemplated in this transaction presents significant safety risks.

If the Surface Transportation Board does not require an EIS, we will not have the information necessary to prevent a severe degradation in the local environment. Moreover, the EIS should look further into the future than the three years for which CN has estimated traffic increases; such a shortsighted view does not take into account major changes expected in our region for future generations. The SEA should immediately begin developing a scope of study for a draft EIS that emphasizes the traffic impact that this change will cause for the entire Barrington area, particularly its impact on transporting students to and from our schools. In addition, we hope that you will look closely at the safety at grade crossings as we want to make sure that all children can safely reach our schools, either by bus, car, or on foot. I look forward to further correspondence with SEA and the Board on the EIS process.

Sincerely,



Brian G. Battle
President
Community Unit School District 220
Barrington, Illinois