



# VILLAGE OF BARRINGTON

November 12, 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 currently serve the Village of Barrington, Illinois as Chief of the Barrington Fire Department. Barrington is a community in the Greater Chicago area, with a population of 10,168. We serve an area of 52 square miles, which also includes the Barrington-Countryside Fire Protection District (which would also be adversely impacted by this acquisition). Many of the residents of this area live near railroad tracks currently operated by the Elgin, Joliet, & Eastern Railway or depend upon major arterial state highways and county roadways intersected by the rail line for vital emergency services.

I have been informed that Canadian National Railway Co. intends to acquire the Elgin, Joliet & Eastern Railway line. I understand that this purchase would greatly increase the rail traffic in Barrington and surrounding areas. I also understand that the estimate of such an increase (15 trains per day) could be grossly understated. I have been informed that 3 to 5 trains per day currently use these tracks and that we can expect overwhelming increases in freight traffic resulting from the planned acquisition.

The drastic increase in freight traffic will impede our ability to serve the community at large, and generally degrade the area's rapid response in providing emergency fire and medical services. We deal with critical time and distance issues in my profession. For example, the first four to six minutes following cardiac arrest is the window of time for resuscitation. A fire doubles in size every minute. A delayed response to a structure fire of five or more minutes could mean the difference between rescue and fire fatalities, as well as minimal property damage and total destruction. These are life-and-death situations that could easily be impacted by increased freight train traffic that blocks access for our responding equipment.

Most of our ambulance patients are taken to Advocate Good Shepherd Hospital (GSH) as that is located near our community. Right now, 30% of our patients who we now take to GSH could end up going to Hoffman Estates (St. Alexian) or Arlington Heights (Northwest Community Hospital) due to freight train traffic or a stopped freight train. Patients taken to either of these hospitals are at-risk for increased harm before receiving necessary life-saving treatments. Additionally, those trips mean that the ambulance and crew will be unavailable to respond to another call (fire or EMS) for an hour and a half or more, depending on traffic, time of day and weather. For a department of our size, and for the impact on quality of life that we have worked so hard to achieve, that is unacceptable.

I believe this transaction warrants serious review by your agency before it is approved. I strongly urge you to take the strictest and most thorough examination of all environmental and safety effects in our community, specifically as regards to the threat of impeding emergency services traffic. I am happy to assist the Board in this review by providing whatever information you need. Please contact me at your convenience. Thank you.

Sincerely,

James E. Arie  
Fire Chief  
Barrington Fire Department  
847/304-3600

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