



***SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD***  
*Washington, DC 20423*

*Section of Environmental Analysis*

December 5, 2008

Re: STB Finance Docket No. 35087, Canadian National Railway Company and Grand Trunk Corporation – Control – EJ&E West Company; Issuance of Final Environmental Impact Statement

Dear Reader:

The Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) is pleased to provide you with the enclosed Final Environmental Impact Statement (Final EIS) for the proposed acquisition of the Elgin, Joliet & Eastern Railway by the Canadian National Railway and Grand Trunk Corporation (Applicants). The Applicants would use the EJ&E rail line to connect all five of CN's rail lines in the Chicago, Illinois, metropolitan area. CN would shift much of the rail traffic currently moving over CN's rail lines in Chicago to the EJ&E rail line.

In preparing this Final EIS, SEA conducted additional environmental analyses, consulted further with Federal, state, and local agencies, and fully considered the more than 9,500 comments received from the public in response to the Draft EIS. As you read the Final EIS, you will note that SEA is concluding that the Proposed Action would have beneficial impacts for some communities and would have adverse impacts to other communities. Communities along the CN rail lines inside the EJ&E arc would experience reduced numbers of freight trains and reductions in vehicle traffic delays, which would have environmental benefits. On the other hand, many communities along the EJ&E rail line already experience traffic congestion; the increased train traffic that would result from the Proposed Action would likely exacerbate that congestion. SEA has recommended environmental mitigation designed to address the project-related adverse impacts, as discussed in Chapter 4 of this Final EIS. In addition to SEA's recommended mitigation, Chapter 4 also sets forth the Applicants' voluntary mitigation and any negotiated agreements that have been reached as of the issuance of this Final EIS, such as the agreement between the Applicants and the City of Joliet, Illinois.

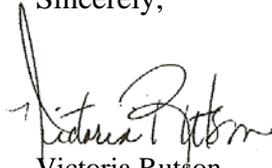
The Final EIS, which is organized consistent with the President's Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations, is intended to be read in conjunction with the Draft EIS, which provides more detailed information on the Proposed Action and Alternatives to agency decisionmakers and the public. In making its final decision on the proposed acquisition, the Board will consider the entire environmental record, including all public comments, the Draft EIS, the Final EIS, and SEA's final recommended environmental mitigation.

SEA anticipates that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will publish a notice of the availability of the Final EIS in the *Federal Register* on December 12, 2008. Under the CEQ regulations (40 CFR 1506.10(b)), agencies must wait 30 days from EPA's *Federal Register* notice before issuing a final decision unless they have an internal appeal process. The Board has such a process, which means that the Board could issue a final decision in less than 30 days from December 12, 2008. If the Board were to do so, SEA recommends that the Board's administrative review period be extended to permit parties to seek agency reconsideration of the final decision within 30 days after it is served, rather than the typical 20 days. The Board would consider any administrative appeals in a subsequent decision.

The Final EIS has been mailed to key reviewing agencies, elected officials, and organizations, as well as the parties of record. It is also available to all interested persons for review in the reference section of public libraries in the project area, where the Draft EIS is also available. For information on where to view a copy of the Final EIS or to receive a copy, please call SEA's toll-free Environmental Hotline at 1-800-347-0689. The entire document is also available on the project web site: [www.stbfinancedocket35087.com](http://www.stbfinancedocket35087.com).

SEA appreciates the efforts of all parties who reviewed and commented on the Draft EIS. Thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,



Victoria Rutson

Chief

Section of Environmental Analysis

Enclosure