

## ILLINOIS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



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Mr. Daniel R. Elliott III  
Chairman  
Surface Transportation Board  
395 East Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20423

Dear Chairman Elliot:

I am writing regarding the application filed by CSX Transportation, Inc. (CSX) seeking regulatory authority to acquire an operating easement known as the Elsdon Subdivision from the Grand Trunk Railroad. The application is docket number FD35522. In its application, CSX seeks to dramatically increase the train traffic through these areas if its purchase is approved. I represent two municipalities along the rail line, namely Evergreen Park and parts of Chicago.

I am concerned with the negative effects of the increase in train traffic, the loss of productivity, and the pollution from idling automobiles and trucks. The most worrisome crossings are located in the heart of Evergreen Park. The tracks cross 95<sup>th</sup> Street near Kedzie Avenue. 95<sup>th</sup> Street is one of the most heavily traveled roads in the region. 95<sup>th</sup> Street provides access to two major highways, the Dan Ryan Expressway (I90/94) to the east and the Tri-State Tollway (I294) to the west.

A community hospital, Little Company of Mary, is ½ mile to the east of the tracks on 95<sup>th</sup> Street. Advocate Christ Medical Center is 1 ½ miles to the west. Advocate Christ is a Level 1 Trauma Center – the only such center serving the South Side of Chicago, the south suburbs, northern Indiana, and Will County. Emergency vehicles use 95<sup>th</sup> Street to access these hospitals. I am terribly worried about the prospect of emergency vehicles experiencing delays at the 95<sup>th</sup> Street crossing and the effect that will have on patient care and outcomes.

The railroad tracks go through town on a diagonal, crossing Kedzie Avenue at 94<sup>th</sup> Street. This intersection is within one block of village hall, the police department, the post office, the library

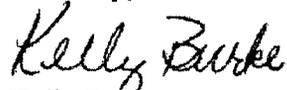
and the junior high school. There is a significant amount of vehicle and pedestrian traffic at this intersection all day long. Increased train traffic will create unsafe conditions, especially during the daytime hours.

In addition to these institutions, the Evergreen Park Fire Department is three blocks north of the intersection. A fire truck or ambulance must cross the tracks to access half of the village residents and to travel to either hospital in the area. If any of the other half of the residents need to be taken to Advocate Christ trauma center, the emergency vehicle has to cross the tracks. Simply put, allowing the dramatic increase in train traffic through this corridor will negatively affect the safety, security, and well-being of the residents of Evergreen Park and the surrounding neighborhoods of Chicago.

Another negative impact may come to commuter rail travel provided by Metra. The Southwest line travels through territory CSX is seeking to acquire. The Southwest line is relatively new and many public officials and residents have been pressing Metra to add more trains to the service. I am concerned that the increase in freight traffic along the line would preclude Metra from adding more train service. Having more commuter service benefits our region, lessens traffic on the roads, and makes our area more desirable to live, work, and do business in.

I do not believe that this acquisition promotes the public interest of the residents of Evergreen Park and surrounding communities. Any benefit provided by the acquisition is clearly outweighed by the safety concerns, increased congestion, wasted fuel, and environmental problems caused by the approval. I hope that the Board will consider these factors in rendering its decision.

Sincerely,



Kelly Burke  
State Representative  
36<sup>th</sup> District

cc: Senator Richard Durbin  
Representative Bobby Rush  
Representative Daniel Lipinski  
Mayor James Sexton  
Alderman Matthew O'Shea  
Alderman Lona Lane