

November 14, 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 the president of Advocate Good Shepherd Hospital, a 183-bed acute care medical center in the Barrington, Illinois area. During my tenure, we have established the area's most advanced cardiac care center and a new state-of-the-art emergency department, both of which were conceived and developed to respond to the critical needs of the growing surrounding communities.

As a Level II Trauma Center, our emergency department handles all but the most dire cases. Its trauma team saved the lives of Fox River Grove children after a commuter train tore through their school bus on October 25, 1995, killing seven and seriously injuring 24. Having occurred only two miles from our doorstep, we are painfully aware of the hazards of rail traffic.

The primary arterial roadways that provide access to the Barrington area communities – and to this hospital – are at the mercy of the numerous grade crossings that intersect and hem in the communities. Our ability to respond to critically ill and injured people depends upon ambulances and available highways. It is already not uncommon for emergency transport to encounter life-threatening delays at nearby grade crossings.

We've become aware 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. This commercial transaction will have a significant impact on public safety, and 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.

Additionally, through the rising rates of asthma in children and the elderly, our respiratory department sees firsthand the environmental impact caused by smog and pollutants. The Federal Environmental Protection Agency itself acknowledges that non-road diesel engines

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are one of the nation's largest sources of fine particulate matter (*PM2.5*) and ozone-forming nitrogen oxides (*NOx*). Both pollutants, it agrees, pose a significant threat to public health and welfare, including premature mortality resulting from fine particulate matter. The train lines in question in this transaction travel directly through the heart of many residential areas.

If the Board does not require an EIS, we will not have the information necessary to prevent a potentially severe degradation to 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 short-term view does not take into account major changes expected in our region for future generations. I again urge the SEA immediately begin developing a scope of study for a draft EIS that emphasizes the impact on public health and safety. I look forward to further correspondence with SEA and the Board on the EIS process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Karen Lambert". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

Karen Lambert  
President, Advocate Good Shepherd Hospital