

November 14, 2007

Ms. Victoria J. Rutson  
Chief, Section of Environmental Analysis  
Surface Transportation board  
395 E Street, S.W.  
Washington, DC 2043-0001

I am writing as a local business owner and public official, urging you to conduct a rigorous analysis of the environmental impact of Canadian National Railway Company's proposed acquisition of the Elgin Joliet and Eastern Railway Co., especially the impact that the acquisition would have upon the Village of Barrington, Illinois.

In addition to living and owning a business in the Barrington town center, I am a member of the Village of Barrington Plan Commission, and for three years I served on the Village Traffic Advisory Committee, which was charged with examining transportation issues as they affect Barrington and its surrounding communities. I believe that I am knowledgeable of the issues and can speak with some level of authority when I warn that significant increases in train traffic on the current EJ&E line would have a devastating impact upon Barrington's residents, businesses, and Historic District.

Barrington is an historic village. Our town center is, in fact, the largest recognized Historic District in the state of Illinois. Our village has worked hard to preserve its heritage. Local residents have acquiesced to significant restrictions on their property rights in order to preserve our village's historic status. All residential renovations in the town center are vetted by an Architectural Review Commission. Historic houses are prohibited from demolition and are subject to significant restrictions in terms of the style and materials used in renovations. All of this has been done in an effort to create a historic district with integrity and with vitality for its residents and for those who come to view the historic district.

Barrington is the town center for a wide-ranging residential area known locally, as "the Barringtons," a group of several villages comprising over 30,000 people who look to the Village of Barrington as the place to shop, go to school, and participate in recreational activities, especially the sports programs that center upon our local parks. Some of the largest of these parks, as well as our local high school, border the current EJ&E tracks.

Our historic town center is bisected by three state highways and by two rail lines, the EJ&E and the Union Pacific. Given the pace of development in the surrounding communities, it has not been possible to re-route any of these major arteries of transportation. The Village center was for many years moribund, with significant vacancies and deteriorating property. Much of the difficulty could be traced to the way in which the historic center had been fragmented by its bisecting roads and rail lines. The EJ&E line is particularly troublesome because it crosses all three of our state highways at grade. All trains on the EJ&E tracks cause traffic delays in and around the central business district.

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In the face of these problems, Village government has worked assiduously to preserve our historic heritage by providing Tax Increment Financing to prospective businesses and by spending public funds in an effort to encourage business investment. Barrington today is just beginning to see the fruition of these efforts. As a Plan Commissioner, I am finally seeing beautifully designed projects which will enrich both our village and the surrounding area for hundreds of years to come. The continuing vibrancy of the Barrington business district, which lies within and around the historic district, is absolutely essential to preservation of the historic district, our heritage, and the quality of life for all 30,000 residents of the Barringtons.

All of this is threatened by the order of magnitude increase in rail traffic contemplated by Canadian Rail's proposed acquisition of the EJ&E. Auto traffic, which many already find intolerable, and for which there is no practical method of amelioration through construction of new roads, will become practically impossible. When the additional trains come, traffic delays on all three state roads will happen at once and will materially impede people from visiting our stores and local offices, undoing a generation of work and investment. The noise of the new trains will disrupt learning at the high school and discourage people from using our parks. Increased rail traffic will make our historic neighborhoods less attractive, destroying not only the personal wealth of many people but also the viability of their neighborhoods and thus our efforts to preserve the Historic District.

The EJ&E has no train stop in Barrington. It does not help our citizens get from place to place, nor does it contribute anything to our local economy; but it has the potential to do significant damage. And the damage will only increase in the years ahead.

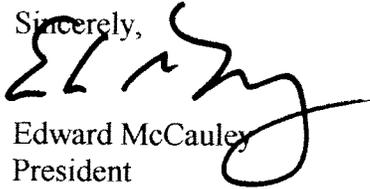
Now is the time to come to grips with this problem. Studies can be done. Positions can be taken that will lessen or eliminate the damage. It is the legitimate, indeed the necessary role of government to protect the people from the unfettered pursuit of profit. If the trains must come, then the train companies must make the necessary investments to protect those who would be most affected by their actions. When we studied local traffic conditions we found that it is possible to revise grades to take the trains below our state roads. Taking the trains below grade would reduce danger, noise, and traffic problems. It is an expensive proposition, but it is feasible. If the train companies want to enjoy the benefits of more train traffic into an unlimited future, then this is the kind of investment they must make to secure their future profits.

It seems clear that an Environmental Impact Statement must be done on this project. When the necessary studies are done, the surface Transportation Board should take a close look at the impact which this acquisition will have on the Village of Barrington, its residents, its businesses, and upon the largest Historic District in the state of Illinois.

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Thank you for your time and consideration. If I can provide any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E. McCauley', written over the word 'Sincerely,'.

Edward McCauley  
President  
McCauley Design, Inc.