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January 16, 2008

Ms. Victoria J. Rutson
Chief of the Section of Environmental Analysis
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, Southwest
Room 1106
Washington, D.C. 20423

RE: Finance Docket No. 35087, Canadian National Railway Company and Grand Trunk Corporation – Control – Elgin, Joliet, and Eastern Railway West Company

Dear Ms. Rutson:

I write today to comment on the Section of Environmental Analysis' (SEA) draft scope for the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Finance Docket No. 35087, Canadian National Railway Company and Grand Trunk Corporation (CN) – Control – Elgin, Joliet, and Eastern Railway West Company (EJ&E).

I would first like to state that I am in opposition to CN's acquisition of EJ&E because I believe it will have a significant negative impact upon the environment and economy of Northwest Indiana. Specifically:

- **I believe that CN's acquisition of the EJ&E would create further obstacles to the expansion of the South Shore Commuter Rail Line.** Recent studies by the research firm Policy Analytics, LLC show that a South Shore expansion could create more than 26,000 new jobs and increase total economic output in our region by \$81.9 billion over the next 30 years. Further, according to the Northwest Indiana Commuter Transit District (NICTD), passengers that rode the South Shore last year drove 91 million fewer miles and saved over 3.9 million gallons of gasoline. NICTD estimates that on an annual basis, the current South Shore service improves regional air quality by eliminating 22.4 tons of composite volatile organic compounds, 368.8 tons of composite carbon monoxide, 25.2 tons of composite nitrogen oxide, and 7.4 tons of particulate matter. Having a reliable and effective alternative to automobile travel improves air quality and reduces our dependence on foreign oil. However, for the past two years, CN has blatantly dismissed attempts by the NICTD to negotiate a right-of-way on existing CN track and make this expansion a reality.

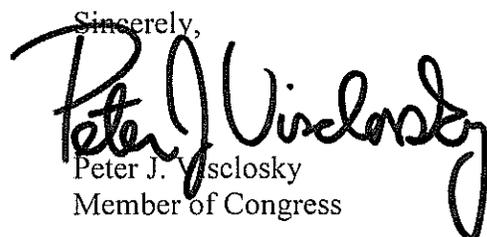
Ms. Victoria J. Rutson
January 16, 2008
FD No. 35087
Page 2

- **I believe that the proposed acquisition would hinder the planned Gary/Chicago International Airport (GCIA) expansion.** Robust development would allow the GCIA to stake its claim as the Chicago region's third major airport, bringing tremendous growth and hundreds of jobs to Northwest Indiana. However, EJ&E and the GCIA have been stalled in negotiations for the past six years. CN's track record gives me no reason to believe that their addition to negotiations would in any way expedite a solution.
- **I believe that the proposed acquisition would result in excessive rail traffic in Northwest Indiana.** According to the Federal Railroad Administration, CN and EJ&E trains currently travel over 175 at-grade highway-rail crossings in Lake County and Porter County. Many of these at-grade crossings are located in heavily populated areas and already cause considerable safety risks and delays in public and commercial traffic. The proposed acquisition is expected to result in a dramatic increase in rail traffic and the subsequent delays in vehicular traffic will result in a decline in the air quality and productivity in the region.

I am pleased that the draft scope of the EIS, prepared by the SEA includes the areas of safety, transportation systems, land use, energy, air quality, noise, biological resources, water resources, socioeconomic effects, environmental justice, and cultural and historical resources. Given the uncooperative history of both of these railroads concerning the economic and environmental progress of Northwest Indiana, I strongly encourage the SEA to take extra time and investigative measures to fully examine this proposal's impact on Northwest Indiana's environment, economy, and quality of life.

Further, I would also like to take this opportunity to express my disappointment that the SEA is only holding a single public open house in Northwest Indiana to give interested parties the opportunity to participate in the draft scoping on this proposed acquisition. If the SEA holds public meetings in the future to solicit comments on the Draft EIS and the subsequent Final EIS, I request that the SEA hold multiple meetings in Northwest Indiana. Given the dramatic increase in rail traffic on the EJ&E line that would result from this acquisition, holding a single public meeting in Northwest Indiana at each step of the environmental review process is grossly insufficient and does not allow the residents of the region ample opportunity to express their concerns with the impacts of this transaction.

Thank you for your serious consideration of the issues that I have brought to your attention. I look forward to working with the SEA as the environmental review proceeds.

Sincerely,

Peter J. Vinclosky
Member of Congress

PJV:jd