

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD ISSUES DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR PROPOSED CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAY ACQUISITION OF ELGIN, JOLIET & EASTERN RAILWAY

The Surface Transportation Board (Board) announced today that its Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) has issued the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Draft EIS) for the proposed acquisition by the Canadian National Railway and Grand Trunk Corporation (collectively, "Applicants") of the Elgin, Joliet & Eastern Railway (EJ&E) in the proceeding entitled *Canadian National Ry. And Grand Trunk Corp.—Control—EJ&E West Co.*, STB Finance Docket No. 35087.

The Draft EIS identifies and analyzes the potential environmental impacts (both beneficial and adverse) that could occur to a wide range of environmental-resource areas as a result of the Applicants' proposed acquisition. The Draft EIS also sets forth SEA's preliminary recommended mitigation and the Applicants' voluntary mitigation measures, and continues to encourage mutually acceptable negotiated agreements to mitigate adverse environmental impacts should the Board approve the proposal. The Draft EIS reflects the active participation—well over 5,000 comments submitted to date—by members of the public in the "Chicagoland" area and beyond.

SEA has distributed the Draft EIS widely for public review and comment. Approximately 5,000 copies of the Draft EIS have been distributed on compact disc to all parties on SEA's environmental distribution list, which includes interested Federally recognized tribes, key governmental agencies, elected officials, and persons expressing an interest in receiving a copy of the Draft EIS or participating in the environmental-review process in this proceeding. SEA also has distributed the Draft EIS to all parties of record (official participants), and has made additional printed copies available for review in 49 libraries throughout Chicagoland.

SEA is providing the public a 60-day comment period on the Draft EIS, which will begin upon the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's issuance of a notice of availability in the *Federal Register* on August 1, 2008. At the conclusion of the comment period, SEA will prepare a Final Environmental Impact Statement (Final EIS) in response to the comments received. The Board will then issue a final decision, based on all public and agency comments received in the public record in this proceeding, that will address the transportation merits of the proposal and the entire environmental record, including the Draft EIS and the Final EIS. That final decision will either approve the proposed acquisition, deny it, or approve it with mitigating conditions, including environmental conditions.

SEA invites public comment on all aspects of the Draft EIS. Comments must be postmarked by **September 30, 2008**. Instructions for submitting comments, and a list of the locations, various dates, and times of public meetings to be held in August and September 2008 in the Chicagoland area, are attached as a Fact Sheet.

The [Draft EIS was issued today, Friday, July 25, 2007 in STB Finance Docket No. 35087.](#) The Draft EIS is available for viewing and downloading via the Board's Web site at <http://www.stb.dot.gov>, under "E-Library," then under "Decisions & Notices," beneath the date "7/25/08." For further information on the proceeding, access the project Web site at www.stbfinancedocket35087.com, or telephone the toll-free information line at **1-800-347-0689**. The Draft EIS also may be viewed on the Board's Web site, under "Environmental Matters," then under "Key Cases." A Fact Sheet is attached.

###

ATTACHMENT

FACT SHEET

The Surface Transportation Board's Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) is providing an extensive public outreach and agency coordination to ensure that the public, agencies, elected officials, and communities have the opportunity to actively participate and comment on the Draft EIS and the Board's environmental review process. Comments on the Draft EIS must be **postmarked by September 30, 2008**, and can be submitted as set forth below.

Beginning on August 25, 2008, SEA will host eight open house/public meetings throughout the Chicagoland area to present the findings of the Draft EIS and receive public comments. Each open house/public meeting will offer an informal open house segment from 4:00-6:00 p.m., followed by a formal public meeting from 6:00-9:00 p.m. At the beginning of each formal public meeting segment, SEA will give a brief overview of its findings in the Draft EIS and will invite interested parties to make oral comments and/or submit written comments. SEA will have a transcriber present to record the oral comments in either English or Spanish. The dates, locations and times of the open house/public meetings are shown below:

OPEN HOUSE/PUBLIC MEETINGS ON DRAFT EIS		
Date	Location	Address
Monday, August 25	Matteson, Illinois Holiday Inn Hotel & Conference Center	500 Holiday Plaza Drive Matteson, IL 60443
Tuesday, August 26	Mundelein, Illinois Crowne Plaza Chicago North Shore	510 E. Route 83 Mundelein, IL 60060
Wednesday, August 27	Barrington, Illinois Barrington High School	616 W. Main Street Barrington, IL 60010
Thursday, August 28	Bartlett, Illinois Bartlett High School	701 Schick Road Bartlett, IL 60103
Monday, Sept. 8	Chicago, Illinois Loyola University of Chicago	25 East Pearson Street Chicago, IL 60611
Tuesday, Sept. 9	Aurora, Illinois West Aurora High School	1201 W. New York Street Aurora, IL 60506
Wednesday, Sept. 10	Gary, Indiana Indiana University Northwest	3400 Broadway Gary, IN 46408
Thursday, Sept. 11	Joliet, Illinois Holiday Inn Hotel & Conference Center	411 S. Larkin Avenue Joliet, IL 60435

The same short presentations will be given by staff from the Board and HDR, Inc. (the Board's contractor) at the beginning of each public meeting following the schedule outlined

below:

Open House: 4:00 p.m.– 6:00 p.m.	Staff from the Board and HDR, Inc. will be available to answer questions and help members of the public review project maps and other findings of the Draft EIS and analysis.
Public Meeting: 6:00 p.m.–9:00 p.m.	Staff from the Board and HDR, Inc. will make a short presentation to the public and will then be available to receive formal comments on the Draft EIS. This portion of the meeting will be held for the purpose of receiving comment. It is not a question-and-answer session. Beginning on July 25, 2008, speaker registration will take place on a first-come, first-served basis by calling the hotline to pre-register in advance (1-800-347-0689), or at the sign-in tables the day of the public meeting. Each speaker will be allocated up to 3 minutes to present his or her comment.

To allow as many speakers as possible the opportunity to speak, SEA asks that groups appoint a single spokesperson; that members of the public who have spoken at one of the other seven public meetings wait until others who have not spoken have the opportunity to be heard; and that speakers summarize their written comments rather than reading their full comments verbatim. In addition to speaking at the public meetings, comments may be submitted through the following methods:

Written Comments: Comment forms will be provided at the public meetings and will be accepted on site or by mail. Additionally, comment forms or written letters may be postmarked by **September 30, 2008** to:

Phillis Johnson-Ball
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20423
Ref: STB Finance Docket No. 35087

Recorded Comments: Court reporters will be available at the public meetings for those who wish to dictate their comments in a more informal setting. Comments may also be recorded at any time during the comment period on the project hotline: 1-800-347-0689.

Electronic Comments: Comments may be filed electronically on the Board's web site, www.stb.dot.gov, by clicking on the E-FILING link. Please refer to STB Finance Docket No. 35087.

All comments received—written, e-filed, or oral—will carry equal weight in helping to complete the EIS process and guide the Board in its decision-making on this matter.

###