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8TH DISTRICT, ILLINOIS

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT
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September 23, 2016

The Honorable Daniel R. Elliott III
Chairman
United States Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20423-0001

The Honorable Ann D. Begeman
Vice Chairman
United States Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20423-0001

The Honorable Deb Miller
United States Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20423-0001

Dear Chairman Elliott and Surface Transportation Board Members:

I write to express serious concern over Canadian Pacific (CP) Railway's refusal to negotiate with the Illinois Tollway Authority in developing a solution that will enable the completion of the Elgin-O'Hare Western Access (EOWA) Project. Through their misleading actions and current legal tactics to impede further construction of EOWA, CP threatens an important transportation infrastructure initiative that will provide our local and regional economy with critical upgrades necessary to remain competitive.

Since 2007, CP had been actively working in good faith with the Illinois Tollway and local public officials in the discussion and design of EOWA. During this time, CP led the Tollway to believe that they would sell portions of their land needed to complete key aspects of EOWA for $114 million, including the north-south corridor to link I-294 and I-90 and provide western access to the airport. Only after construction had begun and more than $1.5 billion, including $140 million in federal funding, was invested in the project, CP unexpectedly reneged on the deal.

CP's actions have endangered a vital infrastructure project that will provide improvements to freight access and connectivity for Illinois' second largest employment center, providing direct access to O'Hare Airport and linking I-90 with I-294. The design plans show EOWA running through what is currently the "Bensenville Yard." In CP's letter to the Surface Transportation Board, it stipulates that building an expressway through this railyard "would significantly impact existing rail operations, severely limit our ability to reconfigure the remaining track and facilities, and would permanently prevent future use and capacity." The enclosed photos show that the parts of the Yard included in the project's design are used for storage and little else. Although CP has been involved in the design and development process of

EOWA for almost a decade, CP has only recently expressed their concern with this project's impacts on their rail operations.

Elgin-O'Hare Western Access will stimulate the regional economy and serve national transportation priorities by connecting one of Chicagoland's largest industrial and manufacturing areas with O'Hare Airport. The north-south corridor linking I-90 and I-294 will provide direct access for goods and passengers traveling to-and-from the airport, creating additional thruway capacity, reducing travel times and lowering fuel costs for both businesses and individuals. Additionally, the Illinois Governor's Advisory Council estimates that approximately 65,000 permanent jobs will be created as a result of the EOWA by 2040, nearly 70 percent of which would be located in communities west of O'Hare.[1] As a testament to the anticipated impacts of EOWA, the U.S. Department of Transportation designated it as a *Project of National and Regional Significance* due to its effects on the regional economy and the execution of other national priorities—one of only 26 projects to receive this coveted title.

Recognizing these important economic benefits to my district and the region, in combination with its importance to national transportation priorities, I wish to express my full support for Elgin O'Hare Western Access. I urge the Surface Transportation Board to consider intervening in this matter to ensure the project's completion as per the originally understood plans between CP and the Tollway.

Sincerely,

Tammy Duckworth

Tammy Duckworth
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Transportation and Public Assets
U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Oversight and Government Reform

[1] Office of the Governor, *Elgin O'Hare West Bypass Advisory Council: Final Report to Governor Pat Quinn*, State of Illinois (June 30, 2011) (online at http://www.illinoistollway.com/documents/10157/4362305/EOWB+Advisory+Council+Final+Report.pdf) (accessed on August 22, 2016).