

**Subject: FW: Durbin-Bean Meeting with CN Non-Productive**

**Date:** Thursday, March 6, 2008 5:40 PM

**From:** Deborah Barry <deborah@wordspecs.com>

**Conversation:** Durbin-Bean Meeting with CN Non-Productive

----- Forwarded Message

**From:** <administrator@fightrailcongestion.com>

**Date:** 5 Mar 2008 19:08:37 -0700

**Subject:** Durbin-Bean Meeting with CN Non-Productive

Crain's Chicago Business reported back about today's Washington DC meeting between CN and Senator Dick Durbin and Representative Melissa Bean. Despite their best efforts to advocate for impacted Illinois communities, the news (reprinted below) is not encouraging to the region:

Crain's Chicago Business

"We didn't get very far," Durbin says of meeting

By Bob Tita March 05, 2008

(Crain's) — A meeting Wednesday with between the chief executive of the Canadian National Railway, U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin and U.S. Rep. Melissa Bean produced little progress toward resolving opposition to the railroad's plan to buy a suburban rail route.

Mr. Durbin said E. Hunter Harrison offered almost no commitments to pay for underpasses along the Elgin Joliet Eastern Railway or to accommodate Metra's plan to use the part of the line for commuter service in the coming years.

"We didn't get very far," Mr. Durbin, an Illinois Democrat, said during a briefing with reporters. "I don't think frankly there was positive climate as to where we go from here."

He said Mr. Harrison indicated the Montreal-based railroad would be willing to provide about \$30 million to \$40 million to mitigating blocked street crossings, noise and other effects from increasing the number of freight trains on the line to more than 20 a day from the four or five trains a day that some parts of the line now handle.

While residents are demanding dozens of street underpasses to alleviate traffic delays from blocked crossings, Mr. Durbin said the railroad executive indicated

he'd consider contributing money for two underpasses among the 133 street crossings.

The nearly 200-mile route arches through the region from Waukegan to Gary, Ind., slicing through communities such as Barrington, West Chicago, Plainfield and Joliet. Mr. Durbin said Mr. Harrison did not offer specifics about which crossings he had in mind.

The senator said at least one of his concerns is being addressed. Talks are under way between the railroad and Amtrak about a maintenance cost-sharing agreement for CN tracks through the South Loop and South Side. If CN were able to route trains to the EJ, it would no longer need the tracks, but Amtrak passenger trains would continue to use them until an alternative route to Union Station is built.

Approval of Canadian National's \$300-million purchase of the EJ is pending before the federal surface transportation board.

"Mr. Harrison presented why this transaction is good for their business model, but he continues to show indifference to the burden on the suburban communities throughout Illinois in terms of increased traffic, safety issues, quality of life, and the undue tax burden associated with supporting this private transaction," Ms. Bean, D-Ill., said in a statement.

A CN spokesman described the meeting as "frank but cordial"

"This is very much a work in progress, so I think it's premature to get into specifics," the spokesman said.

----- End of Forwarded Message