


I TEAM

Suburban coalition files federal appeal critical of recent railway merger

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A petition was filed with the 7th Circuit Court of Appeals to stop the CPKC merger, citing concerns about possible future train derailments.

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CHICAGO (WLS) -- Northwest suburban Chicago is beginning to see the impact of the recent \$30 billion-plus railway merger of Canadian Pacific and Kansas City Southern.

The first new run since the mega deal was approved is scheduled to roll out of the Bensenville train yard Thursday. It came along with a safety appeal just filed in federal court that claims critical evidence was ignored in the government's approval of the merger.

CPKC is the only railway connecting Canada, the U.S. and Mexico: more than 20,000 miles of track creating a single rail system, increasing their number of freight trains in our area from three to 11, and maybe even more.

After much debate, federal regulators approved the merger between Canadian Pacific and Kansas City Southern railroads in mid-March, a merger a suburban coalition fought.

The first new CPKC freight train left the newly expanded Bensenville rail yard Thursday headed to Mexico.



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In March, a Canadian Pacific train derailed in Franklin Park. Nobody was injured and no hazardous materials leaked.

"It's just a matter of time before we have a problem," said Chief James Burke of the Wood Dale Fire Department.

Nearly 11,000 additional train cars carrying hazardous materials will be added during the next three years.

"We've already started some discussion with how we might want to change some of our responses that would allow us to handle emergencies," said Chief Burke.

The merged company is under an unprecedented seven year oversight period. Other conditions must be met to mitigate environmental impacts and safety concerns.

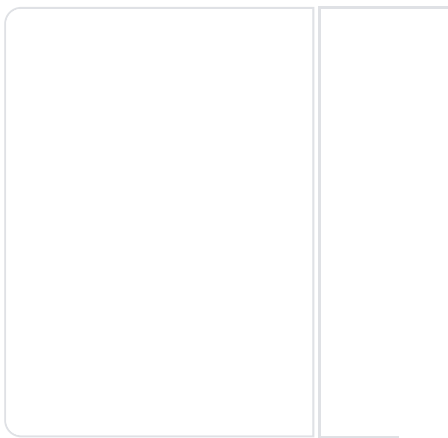
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But many still feel the merger was pushed through too quickly.

"We're watching them put profits over personal safety. I think we were heard, but we weren't listened to," said Frank DeSimone, Bensenville Village President.

"We know that there are three derailments per day in this country per day. It's not just about traffic or inconvenience of people. This is safety. This is lives that will be at risk if we don't have the necessary mitigations," said Rep. Delia Ramirez.

Records show Canadian Pacific has the best safety record during the past 17 years of any railroad its size.

An I-Team data analysis shows 94% of all hazardous materials incidents last year were truck related. For railroads, it was a little

more than 1%.

Statewide since 2020, there have been 58 train incidents involving hazardous materials, two with injuries. The only train hazmat-associated fatality in Illinois was in Cherry Valley in 2009.

Canadian Pacific Kansas City declined the I-Team's request for an interview, but in an e-mail officials state the merger means there will be 64,000 fewer semi trucks on the road every year, claiming that will reduce congestion and emissions.

But attorney Shawn Collins said the increased rail traffic harms the environment.

CPKC's 168 page safety plan includes use of technology to alert emergency response agencies in real time if a railroad crossing's gates are active, and installation of advanced warning signs to alert motorists on other streets to consider different routes.

A community liaison will work with suburban leaders on any issues.

"Let's put the pressure on the railroads now to show us that they care and that they're going to be responsive in terms of the length of the trains and the impact they'll have on those communities," said Sen. Dick Durbin.

The safety appeal is asking for dozens of changes in how the merger plays out, with Chicago's 7th circuit court of appeals as the next stop.

Full Comment from CPKC

In our view, the U.S. Surface Transportation Board conducted a comprehensive, thorough and thoughtful review of the combination, and its environmental impacts, as part of a more than year-long regulatory review and environmental impact study. We believe that unprecedented examination of the facts

produced the right final decision which clearly recognizes the many benefits of the CPKC combination.

CPKC remains committed to being a good neighbor in the communities where we operate and to an open dialogue with communities across our network to address local concerns.

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