

Daily Herald

Suburban Chicago's Information Source

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A massive, hazardous chemical spill two weeks ago in East Palestine, Ohio, caused by a derailed train hauling tank cars, illustrates the catastrophic consequences of freight rail accidents in urban areas. Almost half of East Palestine's residents were forced to evacuate, and the long-term health and environmental impacts from the hazardous materials spill remain unknown.

We warned federal officials and regulators of the sky-high risks and everyday negative impacts that will undoubtedly result from Canadian Pacific's planned \$31 billion merger with Kansas City Southern. If approved, the number of freight trains running through our communities will quadruple, resulting in real harms, which include but are by no means limited to potential derailments.

That's why our civil engineers conducted an in-depth analysis and presented it to the U.S. Surface Transportation Board (STB). At the same time, it prepared its Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed merger. We are concerned about more hazardous materials traveling through densely populated areas along Metra's Milwaukee District West Line from Chicago to Elgin.

Despite receiving verified data and expert testimony detailing the actual impacts and potential harms of increasing freight traffic in our area, the final EIS concluded that the merger, as proposed, would cause only a minor effect on safety, emergency response, and traffic delays.

Unfortunately, the railroads have a track record of prioritizing profits over safety.

The EIS is fundamentally deficient and flawed. We urge the STB to independently analyze the potential dangers this proposed merger will have on

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protect our citizens as seriously as we do before tragedy strikes again.

Carie Anne Ergo, Village Administrator

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