

## (August 21, 2008) Pioneer Press: Lipinski says railroad plan would lower local freight traffic

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<http://www.pioneerlocal.com/westernsprings/news/1119681,ws-lipinski-082108-s1.article>

U.S. Rep. Dan Lipinski, D-3rd, Western Springs, said Aug. 20 the Canadian National Railway's proposed purchase of the Elgin, Joliet & Eastern Railway would mean nine fewer trains a day in La Grange and LaGrange Park.

He voiced support for federal approval of the plan during a town meeting with a standing-room only crowd of more than 80 constituents in the LaGrange Park Library basement.

Lipinski, the only Illinois representative on the House Transportation Committee, also outlined federal funding dilemmas faced by mass transit projects and the stalemate among Illinois lawmakers in Springfield, which hamstrings improvement projects. Although 80 percent of funding for certain road improvements or mass transit projects is available from Washington, the law requires that the other 20 percent must come from state or local sources to secure federal dollars, he explained.

When asked to back off supporting quotas of ethanol as an alternative fuel, Lipinski said quotas should be adjusted, and the substance isn't a long-term solution to decreasing oil dependency.

"We need to look at producing ethanol from other plants, not food plants like corn," he said.

Tanya Murray of LaGrange Park made an impassioned plea to stop funding the war in Iraq so more dollars would be available at home to fund transportation improvements, education and health care.

"Congress continues to pay for the war at \$720 million a day or \$500,000 a minute," Murray said. "Why do you continue to fund this war and pay for the war profiteers when over 70 percent of this district voted in a war referendum to stop funding it."

Lipinski said he voted for funding bills with deadlines for troop withdrawals, but the measures didn't pass. Instead, he voted to continue the funding until early next year and noted the need to set a flexible deadline to bring troops home. Private contractors for such services as meals and laundry should be eliminated, he said.

When asked why a Democratic Congress didn't attempt to impeach President George Bush for incompetence, Lipinski responded that lawmakers attempted to "get things done" rather than pursue impeachment proceedings that would have paralyzed the country similar to the Republicans' attempted ouster of President Bill Clinton.

"This is the first time I've ever been to a town meeting," said Jean Richardson of Westchester. "It was good. I got some good answers."

But Bill Fogarty of La Grange said he was disappointed in Lipinski's response to regulations for offshore oil drilling.

"Still, I applaud him for being here and taking questions," Fogarty said.