

## (September 25, 2008) Chicago Tribune: House panel approves stricter rules on railroad mergers

Measure aimed at Canadian National Railway's deal to buy Elgin, Joliet & Eastern Railway

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A congressional committee approved legislation Wednesday that would tighten the rules on railroad mergers by requiring federal regulators to weigh the safety and environmental impact on communities.

The measure was aimed at Canadian National Railway's pending \$300 million deal to purchase the Elgin, Joliet & Eastern Railway, which runs through an arc of suburbs from Waukegan to Joliet to Gary. The proposed sale has stirred opposition in communities along the EJ&E where freight traffic would triple or quadruple.

The legislation would require the U.S. Surface Transportation Board to consider such issues as grade-crossing safety, emergency response time and the effect on commuter rail passenger transportation.

The board now is required to weigh only anti-competitive merits of a major railroad merger. Board commissioners testified this month that the legislation is unnecessary.

The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee sent the measure to the full House and Senate.

Several Congress members representing the suburbs who oppose the purchase, including Democratic Reps. Melissa Bean and Bill Foster and Republicans Judy Biggert, Peter Roskam and Donald Manzullo, called for the tighter rules. They want them made retroactive to cover the CN acquisition.

Rep. Dan Lipinski, who supports the CN deal, said the rule change would ensure that the board would consider the benefits to the Chicago region, including suburbs where freight traffic would decrease.