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To: Canada Transportation Act Review Secretariat

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Good day,

In September, 1990, when my wife and I built a home two and one half blocks from one of the railway crossings in the Town of Viking that has an unobstructed view of the crossing, the number of trains per day was a small fraction of the traffic that is present today. Since then, there have been two sidings installed on either side of Highway 36 that converge at the crossing nearest to our home. On average, there are now over 40 trains per day that proceed through town and the noise and aggravation levels have gotten to an unbearable state where we are unable to achieve a full nights sleep, every night. A few, but not all, engineers seem to take great delight in blowing the train whistles for an extended period of time seemingly with the concept that, if they are awake, you should be as well.

The engineers are required by their regulations to blow their whistles four times. Two long blasts, a short blast and a final long blast just as the engine is proceeding over the crossing.

The two crossings in the Town of Viking have all the available safety features in place, which are:

- 1.) bells that ring announcing the arrival of the train at the crossing shortly,
- 2.) red lights on the steel posts at each side of the crossing that flash prior to the arrival of the train at the crossing and as long as the train is proceeding over the crossing, and,
- 3.) arms that deploy over the road blocking highway traffic from proceeding over the crossing. These arms also have red lights that flash all the while they are deployed.

A number of other communities have succeeded in having the train whistles stopped, however it is quite expensive and each municipality has had to bear the full brunt of the cost. When I first

started investigating the steps necessary to have the train whistles stopped, I found it incredulous that, in our community's case, the most expensive part would be the hiring of an engineering firm at a cost of \$23,000.00 to confirm to anyone that is interested, that all the safety features are in place, when anyone with ears and eyes could tell this in a moment at no cost. Furthermore, the sightlines for the engineers are not hampered by trees or bushes and the track here is in a straight line.

The present system in place that enables a community to stop the train whistles seems to put an inordinate financial burden on the taxpayers of these communities. Each small community already contends with high operating costs making it almost impossible to keep taxes at a reasonable level compared to larger centres. If every community were to attempt to have the train whistles stopped, the total cost would be astronomical. I would hope that somehow, sanity would prevail.

There are some residents who are not bothered by the whistles, however most of these people live further away from the crossings than we are situated. Others are concerned about the possibility that if the train whistles stop, if someone is on the tracks, there will be no warning. In fact, if the engineer sees a potential issue, even in a “no whistle” zone, he or she is **required** to blow the train whistles in an attempt to alert the people or animals in the way of the potential danger.

Furthermore, some people point to the many people who have been literally run over by trains while walking on the tracks (apparently listening to loud music with head sets on) or vehicles that have been hit by while proceeding across the tracks as evidence that the train whistles should be continued. I contend that if the train whistles actually were a safety feature, the people involved in these incidents would still be alive today. Train whistles obviously did no good in the instances I've pointed out.

What I find really mind boggling is the instances between midnight and 6 A.M., when trains start moving from the sidings to the East and West of the Highway 36 crossing at very slow speeds, the train engineers are able to see several miles in each direction that there is absolutely no traffic, and still they blow the whistles, waking most people in the area.

Until last year, we always had a dog. We noticed that when our dogs were outside, as each train proceeded through town blowing it's whistle, our dogs would howl in obvious pain, it seems as an attempt to counter the noise of the train whistle. When possible, we would cover the ears of our dog with our hands cupped, which seemed to muffle the noise enough to ease the discomfort. In retrospect, it does not surprise me that towards the end of the life of each of our dogs, they were deaf. Also, both my wife and I have hearing aids, I'm confident because of the high decibel level of the train whistles. We spend a lot of time out doors and often wear hearing protection to reduce the decibel level of the train whistles.

I would hope that a system be put in place that would enable a community that had all the safety features in place, as in the case of our town, to simply notify the CN Rail people to cease blowing their whistles as they proceed through our town unless there is some one or something on the tracks..

I encourage you to visit our community to find out first hand what we endure. You are welcome in our home at the date and time of your choosing. Our children have all grown up and left home so we have at least two spare bedrooms. I will even pick you up at the Edmonton International airport if you choose that mode of travel, or pick you up at the train station if you travel by way of Via Rail.

I hope that my submission will be of benefit to you and I truly hope that our attempt to have the train whistles stopped at the two crossings in Viking is successful at little or no cost. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours truly,

Dale Morrival