

Attention: Honourable David L. Emerson:

I would like to submit my concerns and experiences regarding railway noise, vibration and safety concerns. There is a very strong need for very definite changes to the Canada Transportation Act.

My wife and I live in Viking Alberta and the main CN Railway runs through the town. We live 3 blocks from the tracks and have experienced a tremendous increase in train noise and vibrations. At present there is at least 41 trains that pass through the town per day. The railway crossing has warning lights, bells and traffic control arms, however CN still blows their train horns. We have put up with train horn blowing at all times of the day and night. It is not uncommon to be waken up at 3:30 a.m. or 4:30 a.m. by a train which will blow it's horn for up to 16 to 20 seconds. At that time in the morning those seconds seem like minutes.

We have tried to have our local elected council work to have this horn blowing eliminated, however CN throws the issue of liability and safety surveys for our local government in the unfortunate happening of a train/vehicle accident. This has scared off our local elected officials as well as many town residents.

Another concern and interference of a person's privacy is the 2 side tracks that we have in our town. Trains will sit there and idle, especially during night time hours. We have to listen to this idling as well as listen to the constant release of compressed air from the train and diesel fumes. Then when a train finally decides to move, we will get the 2 long horn blows followed by 1 short blow (this apparently comes from back in the 1800's when the Queen's ship was leaving harbor to notify other ships). Then we are subjected to the horn being blown in advance of the crossing as well as being blown totally through the crossing. This is what leads up to 16 to 20 seconds and gets to be totally unbearable. I have had discussions with CN on this, but all CN will tell me is that my local council has to spend the money on the safety survey and then pass an anti horn blowing bylaw. Why should our town be subjected to this cost and potential liability? CN should just eliminate the horn blowing at all controlled crossings that have open sight lines.

The next issue is that of train vibrations in our house. There have been times, this past winter where the pictures on our walls badly vibrated. For further information, our house was newly constructed 12 years ago and is very well built, passing all required home inspections. I have had discussions with CN about this and was told that it was an issue with a road/rail crossing. They did do some work on this crossing this summer so I will see if the vibration issue shows up again this winter.

My other concern is the length and weight of these trains. CN has upgraded their rails and rail ties, but I do not believe that the rail line sub grade is able to handle this extra weight of these trains at the speeds that they travel. Just look at the number of very recent derailments just this past year. We have had a reported 20 derailments in Alberta alone in less than a year.

I have had discussions with persons with Transport Canada based in Winnipeg Manitoba on these issues, but have been told that ultimately the final decision lies with the Federal Government of Canada. Unfortunately CN has been able to greatly influence Federal Canada politicians and get much of the Transport Canada suggestions changed or eliminated. This is done totally for CN's interests, with total disregard for residents who live in close proximity to the railway.

I have had discussions with my local elected MP, Mr. Leon Benoit; but this has been a very frustrating experience as nothing has been accomplished. Consequently, unfortunately I just gave up trying to work with him.

I have had a discussion with Honorable Minister Lisa Raitt's office, but again, it just ends with my telephone conversation and nothing gets done. Goodness gracious, how much power and influence does CN have with the Government of Canada and our elected officials?

Can you please take my concerns and my email seriously when you head up this review?

We need specific numeric limits set for train horns and noise.  
We need specific numeric limits on vibrations. We do not need "reasonable" limits. That is a ridiculous limit.  
We need some legislation by the Federal Government of Canada that will give back the peace and quiet to residents across Canada that we all deserve.

Please, please do something about this CN monopoly of the Canadian residents.

Please accept my thanks in advance. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact myself via email.

Yours truly,  
Garry and Maryann Wolosinka  
Viking Alberta