

Member Rogan moved and Member Blonigan seconded a motion that the following resolution be read and adopted this 17th day of February 2015.

RESOLUTION NO. 7402

A RESOLUTION PETITIONING THE SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD TO REQUIRE AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT ON CONSTRUCTION OF RAILROAD CONNECTOR TRACK IN CRYSTAL, MINNESOTA, AND THE CHANGE IN BURLINGTON NORTHERN-SANTA FE (BNSF) RAILWAY TRACK USE BY CANADIAN PACIFIC (CP) RAILROAD, WHICH PERMITS AN ALTERNATIVE ROUTING OF UNIT TRAINS TRANSPORTING OIL PRODUCTS THROUGH THE TWIN CITIES METROPOLITAN AREA

WHEREAS, Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railway Company and Canadian Pacific (CP) railroad each own track that intersects in the city of Crystal, Minnesota, and have taken preliminary action on a project to construct connector track at the site of the intersection; and

WHEREAS, the BNSF rail line through Crystal, Robbinsdale, Golden Valley, and Minneapolis is a "spur line" that terminates in Monticello, is not connected to any other rail lines along the spur, and therefore only carries minimal train traffic needed for train shipments along this spur; and

WHEREAS, as a "spur line" this BNSF spur has never been used to transport cargo that is not going to or coming from one of the few communities along this spur; and

WHEREAS, the proposed connector track would be built on land not currently owned by either railroad and which is home to several active businesses; and

WHEREAS, the train traffic on the "spur line" tracks through Robbinsdale, Crystal, Golden Valley, and Minneapolis for over 50 years has been limited to 2 or 3 short trains a day and with the transition of a business in Robbinsdale 10 years ago has been 3 short trains a week which clear the three downtown train crossings in less than 1 minute; and

WHEREAS, the proposed connection would connect the CP rail to the BNSF spur rail, and dramatically increase the number of trains using the section of the BNSF spur rail line through Crystal, Robbinsdale, Golden Valley, and Minneapolis and significantly alter the type of cargo transported on trains using this spur line and the length of the trains using this spur line; and

WHEREAS, such railroad connector track allows alternative routing of unit trains having a total length of over one mile and carrying volatile oil products currently transported through the Twin Cities metropolitan area; and

WHEREAS, one mile long trains on this “spur line” in Robbinsdale will block all four at grade crossings in Robbinsdale for more than 5 minutes causing significant traffic jams and preventing first responders from responding to public safety events in a timely manner; and

WHEREAS, resulting re-routing due to new railroad connector track provides a new transportation route for unit trains carrying volatile oil products, which poses numerous potentially negative safety and environmental effects in several cities including Robbinsdale, Crystal, Golden Valley, and Minneapolis; and

WHEREAS, two of Robbinsdale’s municipal drinking water wells are located immediately adjacent to the railroad tracks; and

WHEREAS, in a 1.5 mile segment of the railroad through Robbinsdale there are over 100 single family homes constructed less than 50 feet from the railroad right-of-way, an apartment building with 42 units constructed less than 5 feet from the railroad right-of-way, an elementary school playground immediately adjacent to the rail right-of-way, and hundreds more homes and businesses within 200 feet of the railroad right-of-way all of which would be affected by noise and safety impacts; and

WHEREAS, such effects include significant vehicular and pedestrian blockages in the cities of Crystal and Robbinsdale of multiple adjacent at-grade highway-rail crossings by a single unit train, which would result in (1) drastically reduced response capabilities of emergency first responders such as firefighters and police due to long diversion of route, (2) and in vehicular and pedestrian congestion; and

WHEREAS, such effects would also include passage of unit trains directly adjacent to environmentally sensitive areas including playgrounds, parks, trails, and wetlands; and

WHEREAS, such effects would also include an increased volume of freight rail transportation on a new route; and

WHEREAS, the Surface Transportation Board in the United States Department of Transportation is authorized under federal law to provide regulatory oversight of freight railroads;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of Robbinsdale, Minnesota is opposed to the proposed CP-BNSF connection because of the significant impacts it would have to public safety, commerce, and quality of life in Robbinsdale; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Council of Robbinsdale, Minnesota urges the Surface Transportation Board to order the BNSF Railway Company or the Canadian Pacific railroad, or both, to complete an environmental impact statement on the change in use of the BNSF track prior to acquiring land, completing final design, or commencing construction of the railroad connector track; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Clerk for the City of Robbinsdale is directed to prepare copies of this Resolution and council staff report and transmit them to the Chairman of the Surface Transportation Board, the President of the United States, the President and the Secretary of the United States Senate, the Speaker and the Clerk of

the United States House of Representatives, Minnesota's Senators and Representatives in Congress; Robbinsdale's Senators and Representatives and Representative Hornstein and Senator Dibble in the Minnesota Legislature; and US Department of Transportation Federal Railroad Administration.

The question was on the adoption of the resolution and upon a vote being taken thereon, the following voted in favor thereof: Rogan, Selman, Backen, Blonigan, Mayor Murphy

and the following voted against the same: none

WHEREUPON SAID RESOLUTION WAS DECLARED DULY PASSED AND ADOPTED THIS 17TH DAY OF FEBRUARY 2015.

ATTEST:

Regan L. Murphy, Mayor

Tom Marshall, City Clerk