

Hawleyville Environmental Advocacy Team

HEAT

A grassroots group of local citizens concerned with keeping Hawleyville clean, green & safe.

Mr. L. Fiorenza
Regional Administrator – Region 1
Federal Railroad Administration
55 Broadway Room 1077
Cambridge Massachusetts 02142

May 18,2010

Re: Route No. 25 Grade Crossing, Housatonic Railroad, Newtown CT

Dear Sir,

This is to inform you of potential unsafe conditions at the Grade crossing at Route No.25 in Hawleyville, Connecticut.



Because of the unique terminal operations of the Housatonic Railroad just east of Route 25, the grade crossing active warning protection (credibility) for Route 25 is questioned by local residents and members of our organization. In order to illustrate this abnormality I have enclosed a DVD disc of a typical train switching movement by locomotives and attached freight cars using the switching network in an adjacent lumberyard. The railroad presently receives shipments of building materials by rail which it temporarily stores for reshipment by truck. This type of railroad operation has already caused damage to the surrounding area, and any increase of freight traffic with its accompanying switching activity using the Route 25 spur as access, it could lead to an accident involving automobiles and school busses.

Several years ago, the railroad began handling solid waste at this location. The railroad transfers solid waste from trucks onto railcars for shipment by rail to out-of-state landfills. The railroad's proposal to increase the range of solid waste and also expand the tonnage of solid waste that it handles at its so-called terminal has proven dangerous on environmental grounds arousing activism from citizens group like our own including town officials. The noise coming from that site beginning early morning is also of concern and has been documented by members of the community.



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Your investigation should also look into why the Housatonic Railroad has experienced many derailments which are documented at the following web site during the past several years. <http://www.dontwastehawleyville.com/derailments.html>. The derailments are often left standing on the right of way for many days without attention, and the citizens of our area are concerned that this is not only a danger to the environment but to railroad safety in general.

We implore you to conduct a safety investigation concerning this matter at your earliest convenience before someone is permanently injured or worse, at this busy grade crossing. We look forward to your response.



Sincerely

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