

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 21, 2016

Mr. Daniel R. Elliott
Chairman
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20423

Mrs. Ann D. Begeman
Board Member
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20423

Mrs. Deb Miller
Vice Chairman
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20423

Dear Chairman Elliott, Vice Chairman Miller, and Member Begeman:

Freight rail is a critical part of our nation's transportation system and the U.S. economy. From agricultural products to automobiles and energy commodities, our states, communities, workers, families, and businesses rely on the freight railroad network to deliver goods safely and efficiently. As Chairman and Ranking Member of the Senate Surface Transportation Subcommittee with jurisdiction over the Surface Transportation Board (STB), we urge the STB to ensure its rules and decisions allow our freight rail system to continue to operate successfully, reinvest in vital infrastructure, and innovate.

In May 2016, Towson University's Regional Economic Studies Institute (RESI) quantified the national impact of major freight railroads on the U.S. economy. RESI found that sizeable industry investments supported 1.5 million jobs, generated \$33 billion in tax revenue, and produced \$274 billion in economic activity in 2014 alone. Thus, it is critical that the federal government enact regulatory policies to ensure this important element of our nation's transportation system continues to thrive and provide the transport of goods upon which Americans depend.

Recently, we have heard concerns about several proposals under consideration by the STB. According to freight railroads, these proposals taken together, could harm the industry's ability to continue its substantial investments in rail infrastructure. Further, we are aware of concerns that some proposed rulemakings may not have included consistent and comprehensive analyses of their anticipated impact on our national freight railroad network and its customers.

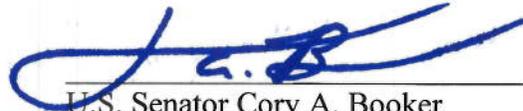
Accordingly, as part of any proposals before the STB, we urge you to consider the impact on the freight rail network and any unintended consequences that regulatory proposals may have on the industry. Prior to finalizing proposed rulemakings, we also request that the STB conduct a comprehensive, consistent, and transparent analysis of the impact on railroads, shippers, and our nation's broader freight network.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



U.S. Senator Deb Fischer
Chairman, Senate Subcommittee on Surface
Transportation and Merchant Marine
Infrastructure, Safety and Security



U.S. Senator Cory A. Booker
Ranking Member, Senate Subcommittee on
Surface Transportation and Merchant
Marine Infrastructure, Safety and Security