

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

August 30, 2021

Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street SW
Washington, D.C. 20423

Dear Chair Oberman, Vice Chair Primus, and Members Begeman, Fuchs, and Schultz:

As the United States recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic, freight railroads and their employees continue to diligently meet historic freight transportation demand, ensure our nation's families and businesses have the products they need most, and do their part to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and make meaningful progress in combatting climate change.

However, to meet our nation's shared vision of a safe, cost-effective, efficient, and sustainable transportation future, freight railroads must be able to continue to make their approximately \$25 billion in annual capital investments. These capital investments enhance safety, maintain and improve the industry's world-class private infrastructure to meet the estimated 30 percent growth in our country's freight transportation demand by 2040, and allow for the rail industry to work alongside federal, state, local, and private sector partners to develop innovative technologies that make operations even more environmentally sustainable. As the Environmental Defense Fund recently explained, "Rail freight is three times more fuel efficient than trucking and is a flexible and efficient way to move bulk commodities long distances." As such, if 10% of the freight shipped by the largest trucks were moved by rail instead, greenhouse gas emissions would fall by more than 17 million tons annually.

It is essential that the Surface Transportation Board (STB) not take any action that would undermine the ability of railroads to make these investments now and into the future. The STB should thoughtfully and thoroughly consider the impacts of its regulatory actions to ensure that freight railroads can continue to meet their customers' evolving needs in a dynamic transportation market and that freight traffic is not ultimately diverted onto less efficient and environmentally friendly modes of transportation.

We look forward to reviewing your ongoing efforts to ensure the freight railroad industry can continue play a critical role in the ongoing economic recovery and successfully meet the dual challenge of growing freight transportation demand and combatting climate change.

Sincerely,

Jared Huffman
Member of Congress

Mike Quigley
Member of Congress

Albio Sires
Member of Congress

Marilyn Strickland
Member of Congress

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Eddie Bernice Johnson
Member of Congress

Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress

Alan Lowenthal
Member of Congress

Ritchie Torres
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Lori Trahan
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