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November 16, 2017

The Honorable John Thune
Chairman, Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bill Nelson
Ranking Member, Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation
United State Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bill Shuster
Chairman, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Peter DeFazio
Ranking Member, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Thune, Ranking Member Nelson, Chairman Shuster and Ranking Member DeFazio:

The U.S. Surface Transportation Board (STB) continues to consider new regulations on freight railroads that stand to harm our economy, consumers and thousands of farms, factories, mines and other businesses that rely on freight rail. The proposed regulations represent a dramatic step backward from the balanced regulatory system that is working today by providing a regulatory benefit to some shippers at the expense of the efficiency of the entire network. These new regulations would undermine the ability of railroads to reinvest capital in the rail network thus imperiling local rail service for most shippers and communities.

At a time when the nation is looking to leverage private investment in infrastructure more than ever and is counting on efficient and safe transportation to facilitate economic growth, Congress should ensure that regulators leave railroads free to invest and innovate to better serve customers and the nation.

We represent communities and companies across the country that know well the public benefits of private freight rail investment. Freight railroads are the only transportation mode that pays for its own infrastructure with almost no government support. This saves taxpayers money while also keeping freight off already crowded and underfunded highway infrastructure. And, every ton of

freight moving by rail rather than by highway means less fuel was consumed for the move and fewer pollutants were emitted.

Most importantly, the massive private investments made by freight railroads connect local farms, companies and mines to markets across the country and world. In 2014 alone, private railroad investments generated \$274 billion in economic activity and supported 1.5 million jobs nationwide. This mean jobs for our companies and a powerful catalyst for economic development in our communities.

Contrary to the assertions of interest groups promoting these unnecessary new federal regulations, the proposals would be extremely damaging to rail-served communities and businesses. The proposed new regulations would force railroads to open their privately-owned networks to competitors by turning over traffic to other railroads, potentially at below-market rates and without any showing of competitive abuse. The proposals undermine existing free market competition and replace it with a regulatory scheme that runs directly counter to the balanced and effective regulatory framework set by Congress in the Staggers Rail Act of 1980, which ushered in a freight rail renaissance in America.

This is a classic case of regulatory overreach. Congress did not ask the STB to take any of these steps when it reauthorized the Board in 2015 and, in fact, these proposals have been previously rejected by Congress 16 times, and for good reason. They would limit railroads' ability to earn enough capital to reinvest in their networks, making the national freight rail system less efficient, less safe and less productive.

At a time when the country is considering massive infrastructure investments to spur economic growth, freight railroads provide a shining example of the power of private investment. We need to support freight railroads' ability to invest to continue to relieve pressure on the highway system and to support the still-recovering economy. In that context, these actions by the STB make no sense. Please preserve the existing smart, balanced regulatory system that protects shippers while allowing railroads to invest.

Sincerely,

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VP Marketing
Stella Jones Corporation (PA)

Ray Betler
President & CEO
Wabtec Corporation (PA)

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York County (PA)

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Ansaldo STS (SC)

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Chairman
Beaufort County Council (SC)

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Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce (SC)

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Harsco Rail

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Moffatt & Nichol (SC)

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Robert Phillips
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STV, Inc. (SC)

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Wheeler Lumber, LLC (SD)

Dave Power
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AXIS Track Report (TN)

Grey Collier
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Central Sales & Service, Inc. (TN)

Dave Armstrong
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Gene Dodson
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North American Tie and Timber, LLC (TN)

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Barry Doss
Representative
Tennessee General Assembly

Jimmy Matlock
Representative
Tennessee General Assembly

Jim Tracy
Senator
Tennessee General Assembly

Terrie Weaver
Representative
Tennessee General Assembly

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Executive Director
Tennessee Municipal League

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President
Bay Area Economic Partnership (TX)

James Carlow
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Bowie County (TX)

Matt Sebesta
Judge
Brazoria County (TX)

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Center Econ. Development Corporation (TX)

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City of Carthage (TX)

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Mayor
City of Center (TX)

Chad Nehring
City Manager
City of Center (TX)

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Mayor
City of Joshua (TX)

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Mayor
City of Texarkana (TX)

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Mayor
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County Judge
Denton County (TX)

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Americas Commercial Leader
GE Transportation (TX)

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Paul Glover
Councilmember
City of Midvale (UT)

Paul Hunt
Councilmember
City of Midvale (UT)

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Nathan Ivie
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Utah County (UT)

Bill Lee
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U.S. Surface Transportation Board

Deb Miller
Vice Chairman
U.S. Surface Transportation Board