

April 30, 2026

The Honorable Members of the Georgia Congressional Delegation
United States Senate and House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.

Dear Members of the Georgia Congressional Delegation,

As Congress works on surface transportation reauthorization, Georgia's business, economic development, and local government stakeholders urge you to advance policies that protect a performance-based, data-driven approach to freight rail safety and operations and reject one-size-fits-all federal mandates that would weaken the efficiency and reliability of our freight rail network.

Georgia's economy is built on moving goods. From global trade flowing through the Port of Savannah and Port of Brunswick to manufacturing and agricultural production across the state, freight rail is a critical link connecting Georgia businesses to national and international markets. With more than 4,700 miles of track serving logistics hubs across the state, rail helps take pressure off major corridors such as I-75, I-85, I-20, and I-95, reducing congestion while supporting job creation and economic growth.

At the same time, freight rail operates under a privately funded infrastructure model that limits the burden on taxpayers. While railroads carry a significant share of the nation's freight, they also invest billions of private dollars each year to maintain and upgrade their own networks—helping preserve public transportation dollars for other critical needs.

As you consider reauthorization legislation, we respectfully ask that you:

1. **Oppose Unnecessary Operational Mandates:** Georgia's export-driven and logistics-focused economy depends on flexible, efficient rail service. Proposals such as federally mandated crew size requirements or train length restrictions would reduce productivity and increase transportation costs for Georgia businesses and consumers. Rail already leads in safety among surface freight modes, with hazmat shipments delivered safely more than 99.99% of the time and the train accident rate improving steadily—down 43% since 2005 and 11% since 2023.
2. **Sustain and Expand Federal Rail Grant Programs:** Federal programs such as the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvement (CRISI) and the Railroad Crossing Elimination (RCE) programs have helped improve safety and mobility in Georgia communities. Investments supporting port access improvements in Savannah and

Brunswick, corridor upgrades on key freight routes, and grade crossing safety projects across urban and rural areas are delivering measurable public benefits. Continued funding for these competitive grant programs is essential to sustaining this progress.

3. **Support Data-Driven Safety Innovation:** Georgia communities benefit when rail policy encourages innovation. Tools like automated track inspection help detect issues earlier, protect workers, and keep freight moving safely. But outdated federal rules risk slowing the adoption of these technologies. To keep improving safety and reliability, federal policy must enable—not hinder—the use of modern tools that reflect today’s capabilities and tomorrow’s needs.

Freight rail remains a vital economic engine for Georgia, reducing pressure on public roadways, strengthening supply chains, and supporting long-term competitiveness. We urge you to advance policies that allow this system to continue delivering results for Georgia communities and the national economy.

Sincerely,

Eric Dial
Mayor
City of Tyrone

Jordan Johnson
Commissioner
City of Augusta

Echols Drew
Senator
Georgia General Assembly

Todd Jones
Representative
Georgia General Assembly

Gwen Flowers-Taylor
Commissioner
Spalding County

Carpenter Kasey
Representative
Georgia General Assembly

Greene Gerald
Representative
Georgia General Assembly

Hughes Kelly
Mayor
City of Barnesville

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