September 10, 2025

The Honorable Sam Graves 1135 Longworth House Office Bldg. Washington, D. C. 20515

The Honorable Rick Larsen 2163 Rayburn House Office Bldg. Washington, D.C. 20515 The Honorable Daniel Webster 2184 Rayburn House Office Bldg. Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Dina Titus 2370 Rayburn House Office Bldg. Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chair Graves, Ranking Member Larsen, Chair Webster, and Ranking Member Titus:

As Congress pursues legislation investing in infrastructure, fostering continued economic development, and facilitating a more resilient transportation network, freight railroads are a key part of the solution. Every ton of freight moved by rail strengthens the economy, supports jobs, and saves taxpayers money.

Freight railroads invest private capital into maintaining and upgrading their infrastructure and technology across 135,000 track miles nationwide while other modes require taxpayer assistance. Freight railroads have spent more than \$830 billion on locomotives, freight cars, tracks, bridges, tunnels, and other equipment and technology since 1980. This equates to 39 cents of every dollar earned.

Private investment correlates directly with safety. The rail employee injury rate in 2023 was at an all-time low, and the train accident and hazmat accident rates are down 30% and 75%, respectively, since 2000.

Moreover, because a train can carry the load of several hundred trucks, railroads ease burdens on the nation's highways and bridges while also reducing congestion and emitting 75% fewer greenhouse gas emissions per ton-mile. As the greenest way to move freight over land, railroads account for approximately 40% of U.S. intercity freight while emitting less than 2% of transportation-related emissions.

In short, freight railroads are essential to the nation with freight demand expected to rise 50% by 2050. As such, the undersigned individuals and organizations believe any infrastructure package must enable continued, robust private-sector investment in freight rail.

When considering infrastructure legislation, Congress should include the following policies:

• **Prioritize Safety and Performance Through Innovation.** Congress should ensure any measure dealing with railroad operations addresses a specific need and is supported by sound data. New measures for future implementation by USDOT should be

performance-based and avoid prescriptive operational requirements. Outdated rules and practices limit innovation and competitiveness, standing in direct conflict with the stated goals of new leaders in Washington.

- Improve Safety Partnership Opportunities. Increasing funding for highway-rail grade crossing projects including through the Section 130 program and the Grade Crossing Elimination program and discretionary grant programs would enable the public sector to improve highway safety along railroad crossings. Other programs such as INFRA, MEGA, and CRISI, are also important for successful PPPs. Moneys aimed towards the freight rail sector should enable government to partner with freight railroads to advance projects of mutual interest. Congress should increase funding for these activities.
- Restore the Highway Trust Fund and Modal Equity. Railroads both compete with trucking companies over freight and count them among their biggest customers. Highway congestion and deficient infrastructure hurt the supply chain. Less efficient modes of transportation receive federal subsidies in the form of artificially low fuel taxes as well as incentives to automate their operations to improve network fluidity and safety. To ensure a robust and solvent Highway Trust Fund (HTF), Congress should base HTF funding on a "user pays" principle. When general fund monies are used to pay for roads and bridges, and when heavy trucks are allowed to operate without paying the full cost of their impact, highways are incentivized for freight movement. Over time, Congress should implement a system to ensure commercial vehicles pay their full infrastructure cost, including through a mileage structure that incorporates vehicle weight.
- Reject Economic Re-Regulation. Balanced economic regulation that favors market
 principles has allowed freight railroads to continue record investment in the rail
 network. Congress should avoid changes to the U.S. Surface Transportation Board as
 part of any infrastructure bill, particularly if it included measures that would threaten
 rail investment and undermine the ability of railroads to help the nation meet other
 policy goals.
- **Support Competitive Grant Programs.** Lawmakers should pursue funding for grant programs that enable the public sector, including state and local governments, to partner with freight and passenger railroads and other modes to improve the overall fluidity of the supply chain.

Thank you for your leadership and for your continued attention to the role freight railroads play in supporting robust and sustainable economies in communities across America.

Sincerely,

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Senate President Pro Tempore

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Joseph Alston

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The Business Council of New York State, Inc.

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Orange County Chamber of Commerce

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Mayor

Siler City

Curtis McRae Commissioner

City of Oxford

Keith Moore Commissioner Carteret County

Mac Morrow Council Member

City of Brevard

Merilyn Newell Mayor

City of Roxboro

Judy Sampson Commissioner Robeson County

North Dakota

Tim Mathern Senator

North Dakota State Senate

Ohio

Miranda Schuller Commissioner

Ward County

Derrick Abney Council Member City of Painesville

Jack Amrhein

President Pro Tem City of Kent Phil Shepherd Representative

North Carolina General Assembly

Tyler Thomas Town Manager Town of Pembroke

John Tovey Commissioner City of Oxford

Harold Weinbrecht

Mayor

Town of Cary

Gray Wilson Commissioner Forsyth County

Jay Zelodis Commissioner Granville County

Austen Schauer Representative

North Dakota House of Representatives

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Senate Democratic Leader Ohio State Legislature

Jeff A. Asbury Council Member City of Bedford

Mike Aspacher

Mayor

City of Bowling Green

Sean Beck Council Member Village of Ada

Joy Bennett Council Member City of Mason

Greg Betts Council Member City of Hilliard

Merisa Bowers Council President City of Gahanna

Lisa Carter Executive Director Portsmouth Area Chamber of Commerce

Greg Cassidy Council Member City of Fostoria

Bill Collins Mayor

Tony Cuda

City of Marion

Council President Cleveland Heights City Council

Denise Driehaus Commissioner Hamilton County

Denise Driehaus Commissioner Hamilton County

Matthew Dukles Council President Village of Grafton J.P. Dutton Commissioner Belmont County

Tom Duvall Council Member City of Circleville

Gregory Eades

City Council Member At Large

City of London

Tammy Eallonardo

Economic Development Director Ross Chillicothe Development

Jerry Echemanix Commissioner Belmont County

Luke Feeney Mayor

City of Chillicothe

Erica Fouss Trustee

Orange Township

Bill Frankart Commissioner Seneca County

Jeanne Gallagher Council Member City of Rocky River

Vince Gianangeli Commissioner Belmont County

Christopher Grau

Mayor

City of Chardon

Marcus Hansen Council Member

City of Sylvania

Dennis Hanwell

Mayor

City of Medina

Richard Henderson

Mayor

Village of Waverly

Paula Hicks-Hudson

Senator

Ohio Legislature

Mark Holtsberry Commissioner

Paulding County

John Impellizzeri

City Council Vice President

City of Munroe Falls

Terry Johnson

Mayor

City of Germantown

Belinda Kenley **Deputy Mayor**

City of Centerville

Dan Lee Mayor

City of Wapakoneta

Larry Martin **Council President** City of Belpre

Norman Martin Council Member City of Seven Hills Allen Mavrides

Mayor

City of Munroe Falls

Allen Mavrides

Mayor

City of Munroe Falls

Rozland McKee

Trustee

Etna Township

Donald L. Mennel

Mayor

City of Fostoria

Nicholas Molnar

Mayor

City of Macedonia

Edward Orcutt

Mayor

City of Brook Park

Council Member

Dale Paullus

City of Fairfield

Jodie A. Perry

Mayor

City of Mansfield

Rachel Phipps

Council Member

City of Bowling Green

Samuel Pierce Council Member

City of Troy

Margo Puffenberger

Council Member City of Maumee

Tristan Rader Kent Smith Representative Senator

Ohio State Legislature Ohio State Legislature

Mitch Rhodus Margo Sommerville

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City of Fairfield City of Akron

William V. Sherer Tommy Starner

Mayor Service-Safety Director

City of Canton City of Bucyrus

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Gordon Short Bruce Truka
Council Member Mayor

City of Strongsville City of Bucyrus

Sharetta Smith Shenise Turner
Mayor Council Member
City of Lima City of Dayton

Ralph Smith Monica Wilson
Council Member Council Member
City of Marion City of Parma

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Oklahoma House of Representatives City of Oklahoma City

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Vice President of Government Affairs Director of Government Relations

Tulsa Chamber of Commerce Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce

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Oregon State Legislature City of Warrenton

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City of Beaverton City of Tigard

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Oregon Cattlemen's Association Oregon State Legislature

Patty Dorroh Lyle Mordhorst

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City of La Grande Oregon State Legislature

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Senator Senator

Oregon State Legislature Oregon State Legislature

Mark Gamba Deb Patterson

Representative Senator

Oregon State Legislature Oregon State Legislature

Chris Gorsek Khanh Pham Senator Senator

Oregon State Legislature Oregon State Legislature

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Lower North Philadelphia Comm. Dev. Corp. Lehigh County

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Council Member Borough President
West Brownsville Borough Charleroi Borough

Von Braddock Jr. Samantha Kaag

Council Member Mayor

West Brownsville Borough City of West Reading

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Michael Ceci Chris Kelly Mayor Mayor

Aldan Borough City of West Mifflin

W. Dean Lacey Debby King
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West Brownsville Borough West Brownsville Borough

Nicole Deary Ernest King
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Lancaster Chamber of Commerce South Fayette Township

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Phoenixville Borough Council Charleroi Borough

Thomas Frawley Barbara A. McGinnis

Executive Director Supervisor

Schuylkill River Passenger Rail Authority Skippack Township

Jason Ortitay Judy Schwank

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Pennsylvania House of Representatives Pennsylvania State Senate

Tracy Pennycuick Brian Smith
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Pennsylvania House of Representatives West Brownsville Borough

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Quakertown Borough West Brownsville Borough

Lisha Rowe Irvin P. Toth
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Cumru Township West Brownsville Borough

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Tony Nelson Council Member City of Chester

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Helene DuhamelJosephine GarciaSenatorRepresentative

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Clark Sowers

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David Thiesse Commissioner Clay County Jim D. Thompson Council Member

City of Sturgis

Kadyn Wittman Representative

South Dakota House of Representatives

Tennessee

BW Beasley Mayor

City of Milan

city of ivilian

Josh Blair

Commissioner City of Alcoa

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Tennessee General Assembly

Anna Childress Commissioner

Marshall County

Larry Green Commissioner Dekalb County

Barry Hutcherson

Mayor

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Tennessee General Assembly

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Tennessee General Assembly

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City of Hitchcock Denison Development Alliance

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President & CEO Mayor City of Brenham

Temple Economic Development

Corporation

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City of Mansfield

Roger McLane Adrian Garcia County Judge Commissioner **Panola County**

Harris County Mark Meuth **Bret Gardella** Commissioner

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Mayor Cedar Park Chamber of Commerce City of Lewisville

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County Judge El Paso Chamber **Caldwell County**

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President & CEO

Galveston Economic Dev. Partnership

Sean Patty

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Hondo EDC

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Abilene Chamber of Commerce

Jose Portillo Jr. County Judge

Presidio County

Teddy Reel

Mayor City of Commerce

Stacia Runnels

Executive Director

Greater Marshall Chamber of Commerce

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President & CEO

Bay Area Houston Transportation

Partnership (BayTran)

Diana Theall
President & CEO

Denison Area Chamber of Commerce

Terry Thomas Mayor Pro Tem

City of Greenville

Jessica Trew

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Hillsboro Economic Development

Corporation

Chris Wallace President & CEO

North Texas Commission

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Utah

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Mayor

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Vermont House of Representatives

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City of St. Albans

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Vermont House of Representatives

Tim Smith Mayor

City of St. Albans

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Vermont House of Representatives

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Virginia General Assembly

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City Manager Mayor

City of Moses Lake City of Shoreline

Tony Ketchum David Schaffert Mayor President & CEO

City of Chehalis Thurston County Chamber

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City of Marysville City of Arlington Police Department

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Steve Catlett Sean Hornbuckle

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Harrison County Commission

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Wisconsin

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Gaile Burchill Supervisor

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Douglas County

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Wisconsin Senate

Dana Johnson Supervisor

Outagamie County

Tara Johnson Representative

Wisconsin State Assembly

Rob Kreibich Representative

Wisconsin State Assembly

Thomas Lund Supervisor Brown County

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Administrative Coordinator

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Howard Miller Supervisor

Winnebago County

Sharlen Moore Alderwoman

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Wisconsin State Assembly

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Winnebago County

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Wisconsin Counties Association

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Satya Rhodes-Conway

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City of Kaukauna

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City of Hartford

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