

April 13, 2026

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

Dear Members of the Kentucky Congressional Delegation,

As state and local leaders, business organizations, and community stakeholders from across the Commonwealth, we write to urge your strong support for freight rail priorities in the upcoming Surface Transportation Reauthorization. Trains move Kentucky's economy—supporting jobs, strengthening supply chains, and ensuring producers, manufacturers, and consumers remain competitive in national and global markets.

Our central location in the eastern United States makes the state a critical freight crossroads. Major rail hubs in Louisville and the greater Cincinnati–Northern Kentucky region connect industries to national corridors reaching coastal ports and interior markets. These connections allow Kentucky manufacturers, agricultural producers, and logistics providers to move goods efficiently and reliably, keeping transportation costs down for businesses and families.

Importantly, freight railroads operate on infrastructure they own, build, maintain, and largely fund themselves. Rail lines also connect directly to inland river ports along the Ohio and Mississippi River systems, expanding market access for local industries. Rail remains especially vital for resource-based sectors, including mining, where it provides the most efficient way to move large volumes of materials to power plants, manufacturers, and export terminals—sustaining rural jobs and supporting the broader industrial economy.

Beyond its direct economic impact, freight rail strengthens transportation efficiency. By moving large volumes of freight long distances, rail reduces highway congestion, limits wear on public roads and helps stabilize supply chain costs—benefits that ultimately help keep everyday goods more affordable for Kentuckians.

As Congress develops the next Surface Transportation Reauthorization, we urge your support for policies that:

1. Sustain and Strengthen Federal Rail Grants: Programs like the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) grant and the Railroad Crossing Elimination (RCE) grant are helping communities across the Commonwealth advance critical safety and infrastructure upgrades. Recent awards include nearly \$9.6 million for the Quarry Road Grade Separation Project, eliminating two at-grade crossings in Hardin, Larue, and Hart Counties, and \$32.2 million for the Kentucky Freight Rail Improvement Program to rehabilitate more than 60 miles of short line track and strengthen rural freight

corridors. Please continue supporting and growing these competitive grants that improve safety, mobility, and system performance.

2. Support Performance-Based Regulation: Freight railroads already operate under comprehensive federal safety oversight while continuing to invest billions annually in infrastructure, equipment, and advanced safety technologies. As a result, the train accident rate is down 43% since 2005 and 11% since 2023. Performance-based regulatory approaches will ensure that railroads can continue improving safety outcomes while maintaining efficient, cost-effective service for Kentucky industries and consumers.

3. Encourage Innovation and Infrastructure Investment: Modern inspection technologies, automated monitoring systems, and predictive maintenance tools improve safety and operational reliability across the rail network. Federal policies that encourage innovation and support continued private-sector infrastructure investment will help ensure that Kentucky's rail system remains competitive and resilient.

From the industrial corridors of Louisville to the river-connected freight gateways along the Ohio River and the long-standing rail networks supporting Kentucky's mining and manufacturing sectors, freight rail continues to serve as a cornerstone of the Commonwealth's economic strength.

We thank you for your leadership and respectfully urge your support for policies that strengthen freight rail infrastructure, support innovation, and preserve the economic competitiveness of the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

Sincerely,

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Mayor
City of Bowling Green

George Bray
Mayor
City of Paducah

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Kentucky House of Representatives

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