

April 13, 2026

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

Dear Members of the Pennsylvania Congressional Delegation,

As local leaders and stakeholders from across the Commonwealth, we write to urge your support for freight rail as Congress works to reauthorize surface transportation legislation.

Pennsylvania's communities and economy rely on a strong rail system—one that is safe, efficient, and built to adapt.

Freight rail plays a vital role in keeping our shelves stocked, our exports moving, and our supply chains steady. With more than 100 million tons of freight moving through Pennsylvania each year, rail supports manufacturers, energy producers, farmers, ports, and distribution centers. It also helps hold down inflationary pressures by keeping transportation costs in check—making everyday goods more affordable for Pennsylvania families.

This work happens largely on privately funded infrastructure. Railroads reinvest billions annually—over \$23 billion in recent years—into safety, modernization, and capacity upgrades across the U.S. In Pennsylvania, 58 freight railroads support over 4,000 jobs, while also connecting our industries to global markets and linking communities across the state. These private investments reduce taxpayer burden by cutting road congestion and wear, and by limiting the need for costly highway expansion.

But this successful model could be undermined by proposals now under consideration in the reauthorization debate. One-size-fits-all federal mandates—like staffing minimums or caps on train length—would disrupt operations without improving safety. They risk raising logistics costs, stalling innovation, and shifting more freight to already stressed highways.

Instead of rigid rules, we urge Congress to pursue a performance-based approach that supports continued improvement without stifling progress:

- **Avoid Operational Mandates That Drive Up Costs:** Mandates on train length or crew size would reduce flexibility and increase costs for shippers and consumers. Rail already follows strict federal safety regulations and continues to improve—mainline accident rates have dropped 43% since 2005, and hazmat arrives safely 99.99% of the time.
- **Support Innovation in Rail Safety:** Modern tools like automated track inspection, sensors, and artificial intelligence can detect issues earlier and more accurately than

manual checks. These innovations help keep our communities safe and goods moving—but outdated rules could block their use. Railroads need the freedom to adopt proven new technologies.

- **Maintain Federal Rail Grant Programs:** Programs like the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) program and the Railroad Crossing Elimination (RCE) program help local communities make rail infrastructure safer and more efficient. These grants leverage private and local investment to fund crossing upgrades, safety improvements, and other projects that matter to Pennsylvanians.

Freight rail helps power Pennsylvania’s economy—and it helps working families by keeping prices lower and goods moving smoothly. Let’s not trade that resilience for unnecessary red tape. We urge you to support policies that preserve flexibility, promote safety, and encourage continued private investment in the nation’s rail network.

Sincerely,

Kendy Alvarez  
Mayor  
Borough of Lewisburg

Randy Atiyeh  
Commissioner  
Whitehall Township

Marc Anderson  
State Representative 92nd District  
Pennsylvania House of Representatives

Dave Bachman  
Chairman  
Moon Township Board of Supervisors

Jay Anderson  
Supervisor  
Hempfield Township Board of Supervisors

Chris Belles  
County Councilor  
Luzerne County

Mike Armanini  
State Representative 75th District  
Pennsylvania House of Representatives

Aaron Bernstine  
State Representative 8th District  
Pennsylvania House of Representatives

Yaniv Aronson  
Mayor  
Borough of Conshohocken

William Bretz  
Vice Chairman  
Hempfield Township Board of Supervisors

Kevin Boozel  
Commissioner  
Butler County Commissioners

Klementina Budnik  
Borough Councilor  
Borough of Phoenixville

Lee Christman  
Commissioner  
Whitehall Township

Kim Clear  
Supervisor  
Millcreek Township

Rock Copeland  
County Councilor  
Erie County Council

Karen Cosner  
City Councilor  
City of Monessen

Dr. Ellen Currie  
Mayor  
Borough of Stroudsburg

Patricia DeMarco, Ph.D.  
Mayor  
Borough of Forest Hills

Gene DiGirolamo  
Commissioner  
Bucks County

Becky Durbin  
Supervisor  
Hempfield Township Board of Supervisors

William Felder  
Borough Councilor  
Borough of Sharon Hill

Tom Fink  
Council Vice President  
Borough of Camp Hill

Ann Flood  
State Representative 138th District  
Pennsylvania House of Representatives

Brian Fochtman  
Chairman  
Somerset County Commissioners

Adam Forgie  
Mayor  
Borough of Turtle Creek

Eric Foy  
Sheriff  
Venango County

Sue Grady  
Borough Councilor  
Borough of Clarks Summit

Keith Greiner  
State Representative 43rd District  
Pennsylvania House of Representatives

Nancy Guent  
State Representative 152nd District  
Pennsylvania House of Representatives

Tony Guy  
Sheriff  
Beaver County

Stephanie Henrick  
Mayor  
Borough of Pottstown

Carol Hill-Evans  
State Representative 95th District  
Pennsylvania House of Representatives

Mark Hondru  
Commissioner  
South Fayette Township Commissioners

Denae House  
Chair Pro Tem  
Borough of Steelton

Derek Huges  
Supervisor  
Forks Township

Liz Iovine  
Council President  
Borough of Ambler

Vanessa Jenkins  
Borough Councilor  
Borough of Steelton

Justin Johnson  
Commissioner  
Harrison Township Commissioners

Dawn Keefer  
State Senator 92nd District  
Pennsylvania State Senate

Carole Kenney  
Supervisor  
Upper Merion Township

Irvin Kimmel  
Vice Chair  
Somerset County Commissioners

Kate Klunk  
State Representative 169th District  
Pennsylvania House of Representatives

Kevin Kodish  
Commissioner  
Mifflin County Commissioners

Thomas Kutz  
State Representative 87th District  
Pennsylvania House of Representatives

Chuck Lazzini  
President  
South Fayette Township Commissioners

Mike Lettieri  
Council Vice President  
Borough of Old Forge

Fred Levering  
Mayor  
Borough of Wyomissing

Leo Lutz  
Mayor  
Borough of Columbia

Scott Martin  
State Senator 13th District  
Pennsylvania State Senate

Betsy McClure  
Vice Chair  
Greene County Commissioners

Timothy McGonigle  
Commissioner  
Mercer County Commissioners

Tina Sokolowski  
Council President  
Borough of Conshohocken

Robert Pasquantonio  
Borough Councilor  
Borough of Brentwood

Steve Thomas  
Council President  
Borough of Brentwood

Tracy Pennycuik  
State Senator 24th District  
Pennsylvania State Senate

Pamela Tokar-Ickes  
Secretary  
Somerset County Commissioners

Jeff Pisarcik  
Commissioner  
Jefferson County Commissioners

Michael Wacey  
Member  
Easttown Township Board of Supervisors

Fred Quinn III  
Borough Councilor  
Borough of Swissvale

Dwan Walker  
Mayor  
City of Aliquippa

Donna Reed  
City Council President 5th District  
City of Reading

R. Douglas Weimer  
Chairman  
Hempfield Township Board of Supervisors

George Reese  
Supervisor  
Hempfield Township Board of Supervisors

Parke Wentling  
State Representative 7th District  
Pennsylvania House of Representatives

Tim Schultz  
Mayor  
Borough of Hatboro

Gene Yaw  
State Senator 23rd District  
Pennsylvania State Senate

Paul Shemansky  
Borough Councilor  
Borough of East Stroudsburg

Mike Yetter  
Borough Councilor  
Borough of Lansdale

Brian Smith  
State Representative 66th District  
Pennsylvania House of Representatives

Jayne Young  
Borough Councilor  
Borough of Lansdowne

