

SENATOR MARY KIFFMEYER

District 30
100 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.
State Office Building
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155



Senate

State of Minnesota

236807

Ex Parte 724

ENTERED

Office of Proceedings

October 10, 2014

Part of

Public Record

September 30, 2014

Surface Transportation Board
Attn: Daniel R. Elliott III, Chairman
395 E St. SW
Washington, D.C. 20423

Dear Chairman Elliott:

As a legislator representing communities surrounding Amtrak's Empire Builder route through Minnesota, and as a member of the Minnesota Senate Transportation Committee, I wish to express my concern regarding the effects of increased freight train traffic and the displacement and de-prioritization of commuter and passenger rail traffic. I am concerned about the safety of my constituents and the loss of economic development opportunities.

Amtrak's Empire Builder route, running from Chicago to Seattle and Portland, has been forced to endure significant delays affecting ridership. Amtrak estimates the average delay for the Empire Builder along its entire route is eight to ten hours. As of June 2014, Amtrak reported a 15 percent drop in ridership attributable to delays. Amtrak estimates its monthly losses to exceed \$1 million for the Empire Builder alone. Given that commercial air or bus service operating on the same route as the Empire Builder is inadequate, this route is vital to the transportation interests of Minnesota and the nation.

A solution must be reached to balance these competing interests. If the passenger rail delays continue, I believe this will not only have a detrimental effect on Amtrak but also on freight carriers who may also find themselves delayed behind passenger trains running hours, if not days, behind schedule.

Please contact me with any questions or concerns you have on this important issue. I appreciate your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary Kiffmeyer".

Mary Kiffmeyer
State Senator
District 30

OFFICE OF THE CLERK
2014 OCT -7 10 26