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WOONSOCKET, RHODE ISLAND

October 6, 2016

Chairman Daniel R. Elliott III  
Vice Chairman Deb Miller  
Member Ann D. Begeman  
Surface Transportation Board  
395 E Street, SW.  
Washington, DC 20423

RE: GENESEE & WYOMING INC. - ACQUISITION OF CONTROL EXEMPTION - PROVIDENCE  
AND WORCESTER RAILROAD COMPANY- Docket Number FD 36064

Dear Honorable Members:

As the Mayor of the City of Woonsocket, RI, I am writing to you regarding the docket brought before the board by Genesee & Wyoming, Inc. (FD 36064.) Woonsocket is host to multiple miles of The Providence and Worcester (P&W) owned and operated track, bridges, grade crossings and a service yard Genesee seeks to acquire and control.

During its entire operation, P&W has been an excellent and responsible corporate citizen. It has responded promptly to any safety or other related concerns the City has raised from its headquarters in Worcester, Massachusetts. Although we anticipate that Genesee will most likely relocate executive management out of the region, it is my hope that we will continue to have a similar relationship with them as a new owner.

Currently, there are two local on-going interests that are of vital importance to the City of Woonsocket that I would respectfully request the Board review and consider during its deliberations of this docket.

The Blackstone Valley Polar Express, operated by the non-profit Blackstone Valley Tourism Council, operates out of Woonsocket's Historic Downtown Depot on a seasonal basis and serves over 20,000 passengers each holiday season. The ticket revenue from these passengers represents the lion's share of the Tourism Council's annual budget, which funds other year-round educational and outreach programs in the area. These passengers patronize Woonsocket's retail, hospitality and food service establishments, bringing regular seasonal revenue. It is my understanding that the Tourism Council is currently one of P&W's top ten largest customers. It is not a traditional freight customer and may not enjoy traditional

protections from loss of service that might arise from a change-in-control of its only viable host, The Providence and Worcester. Therefore, I am seeking your consideration of any protections that may be appropriate to ensure access and reasonable use as you consider Genesee & Wyoming Inc's request to purchase.

More important to the economic revival and future of Woonsocket and surrounding areas is the Boston Surface Railroad Company (BSRC), a local company headquartered within the City. BSRC has recently been granted the authority by The Board to operate passenger service, again hosted by P&W, between Worcester, MA, Woonsocket, and Providence, RI. The restoration of this service would increase the employment and transportation options for the citizens of the region as well as provide positive environmental benefits as an alternative to automobile travel. While I understand that the Rail Passenger Service Act of 1970 relieved freight railroads of the obligation to carry passengers, it was motivated by the desire to remove the burden of the monetary loss from the railroads due to a decline in passenger rail travel. It is also my understanding that under the plan that P&W and BSRC have been diligently working on, the host railroad would not bear any financial burden and in fact would be guaranteed a profit by BSRC. This would seem to uphold the spirit of the Act while ensuring a major economic and cultural stimulus to the City of Woonsocket and its surrounding communities. Because BSRC has no other viable host other than The Providence and Worcester, it is critical that the Board recognize and protect this viable proposal as part of any sale.

In closing, I would respectfully request that the Board grant Genesee & Wyoming's petition conditionally on its agreeing to service Boston Surface Railroad Company, Inc. and The Blackstone Valley Tourism Council as part of its ongoing railroad operations.

If you have any other questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Mayor Lisa Baldelli-Hunt

cc: All parties of record