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BUDGET
RULES AND ADMINISTRATION
JOINT ECONOMIC COMMITTEE

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4606

Apr. 11, 2011

The Honorable Dan Elliot
Chairman
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW; Suite 1220
Washington, DC 20423-0001

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Dear Chairman Elliot:

I write regarding Docket No. E.P. 705 and wish to express my support for a strong freight railroad network, not only in the Commonwealth of Virginia but across the nation. In light of the Surface Transportation Board's upcoming hearing on competition in the railroad industry, it is important that balanced economic regulation is maintained.

Freight railroads are a vital industry for Virginia. The Commonwealth is served by ten rail operators, including CSX and Norfolk Southern, which has its headquarters in Norfolk. These railroads operate over more than 3,200 miles of track, employ more than 5,500 Virginians, and account for more than \$360 million in annual payroll. The industries that freight railroads serve in Virginia depend on them for the safe and efficient transportation of goods to their customers.

Freight rail is the most capital intensive industry in the nation, and it is imperative that continued reinvestment be encouraged. With Virginia and so many other states under pressure to expand the economy and create jobs, I encourage you to keep in mind the importance of a healthy freight rail network as the Surface Transportation Board proceeds with hearings on competition in the railroad industry.

I appreciate your consideration of my concerns, and hope the Board will take a balanced and reasonable approach in its consideration of our nation's rail network that continues to provide a true public benefit to our nation.

Sincerely,



Mark R. Warner
United States Senator