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April 12, 2016

The Honorable Daniel R. Elliott  
Surface Transportation Board  
Attn: Docket EP-728  
395 E Street SW  
Washington, DC 20423-0001

Re: Docket No. EP 728, Policy Statement on Implementing Intercity Passenger Train On-Time Performance and Preference Provisions of 49 U.S.C. 24308 (c) and (f)

Dear Chairman Elliott:

As Mayor of the City of Yuma, which is served by Amtrak, I write to provide comments to the above-referenced Surface Transportation Board (STB) Docket No. EP 728, Policy Statement and request that STB take the following actions to preserve existing passenger rail services for our citizens.

- *Withdraw the proposed policy about Preference:* STB should not rewrite federal law as it has proposed, but rather the agency should adhere to federal law and ensure that railroads continue to grant preference to Amtrak passenger trains operating on their tracks.
- *Use STB's review powers that have been granted to the agency:* When delays exist or where railroads have requested relief, undertake federally-directed reviews to analyze conditions on affected routes and recommend remedies.
- *Measure on-time performance at all stations:* STB should not limit its review of on-time performance solely to originating and terminating times on routes. Such an action would mean that on-time preference would never be measured in more than 20 states serving scores of cities along the routes.

Because passengers from our city and region rely heavily on reliable intercity passenger train service and the reliability is dependent on Amtrak's ability to have priority over freight trains, we would oppose any policy that would reduce an Amtrak train's right to preference over freight trains, including the aforementioned Preference Policy Statement.

Reliable passenger train service is critical to our region relative to quality of life, economic vitality, and national defense since Yuma is home to two key military installations and a popular destination for winter visitors and other tourists. Therefore, we strongly recommend that STB withdraw its Preference Policy to ensure that efficient and reliable passenger train service is preserved for our region.

Thank you for your consideration my comments that seek to ensure that we make efforts to hopefully avoid future disruptions to passenger rail services in Yuma.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Douglas Nicholls". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and "N".

Douglas Nicholls, PE, RLS

Mayor City of Yuma