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• March 31, 2011

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• The Honorable Daniel R. Elliot, III
Chairman
• Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Suite 1220
Washington, DC 20423-0001



EP 705

Dear Chairman Elliot:

A strong and robust freight railroad network is critical to the economic success of the nation, the Midwest and to the St. Louis region. The St. Louis Regional Chamber & Growth Association (RCGA), an advocate for the area's business community since 1836, encourages the vitality of this important industry sector.

Greater St. Louis is the nation's third largest rail center and enjoys service from six Class 1 railroads. The region's railroad resources are supplemented by our strategic geography at the confluence of three major rivers, as a connecting point for four major interstate highways and finally as a strategic, mid-continent location for passenger and cargo aviation. A unique advantage that St. Louis enjoys and shares with just a few other U.S. markets is its true "multimodal" capacity coupled with a location that provides an enviable reach in mid-America.

With nearly four thousand member companies, the RCGA is the regional Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development organization for Greater St. Louis. The St. Louis region is the 18th largest U.S. metropolitan area with a population of 2.8 million residents and geography encompassing sixteen counties located in Missouri and Illinois. A healthy U.S. freight railroad system is critical to our continued economic growth. Encouraging the freight railroads to make new investments in their systems will lead to new job creation, improved reliability and service as well as provide a cost effective and environmentally friendly means for the transport of goods.

As the United States emerges from the recent recession, we believe that it is important to support the rail industry and encourage their investment in improved rail infrastructure. Policies or regulations that would diminish or inhibit the freight railroads ability or desire to invest would surely have a negative impact on economic development. We respectfully request that any regulatory or policy changes proposed or under consideration are carefully weighed so as to not deter our nations return to a healthy and vibrant economy.

Thank you for our consideration of our position. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

James F. Alexander
Vice President for Economic Development

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