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Ms. Cynthia T. Brown
Chief, Section of Administration
Office of Proceedings
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20423

Dear Ms. Brown:

I am writing to urge the Surface Transportation Board to make a finding that there is a profound lack of rail-to-rail competition in the national rail system. The STB should change its policies to enable increased rail-to-rail competition.

Currently, anti-competitive practices within the railroad industry have driven costs up on my monthly electric bill. That's not right and the STB can help fix it. To Ms. C. Brown I would like to add my own comments. I have been in the electric utility business for over 25 years. I started out working in a coal fired power plant here in Minnesota. Much of the coal at that time came by rail. This was in the mid- 80's and the shipping rates were ok at that time. However the last few years the rate have gotten out of hand. I believe this has to do with the lack of competition. If the board of directors of the electric utility I now work for increased the rates as the rail road has, they would be voted out of there position. I believe it is very important to keep cost's competitive and to help keep electric rates affordable. The electric utilities are getting hit from many-side. Such as more and more environmental reg. Co2 cost, rail charges, labor, fuel, and just day to day increases to operate. I also believe Cynthia you have a great role to play in helping slow down the high rise in rail costs. Thank you for your time. And feel free to call me if you have any questions or concerns.

Rural-based business and agriculture rely on affordable electricity. Increased rail competition will help maintain affordable electric rates in rural America and will improve economic opportunities for rural communities like mine.

Increased rail competition will also increase the revenues of American agriculture by improving the ability of producers and manufacturers to ship their products affordably, thus improving exports, creating jobs and improving the standard of living in rural communities.

The Surface Transportation Board has an opportunity to make a positive difference and help improve our economy. The comments that the STB has received include numerous examples of the lack of adequate competition in the railroad industry. I hope the STB will find that there is inadequate competition in the railroad industry and will then revise their policies to enhance rail-to-rail competition in order to help preserve affordable electricity and good jobs throughout America.

Thank you.

Robert Senst
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