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Congress of the United States
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April 7, 2011

Chairman Daniel R. Elliot, III
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20423

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Dear Chairman Elliott:

I write to you regarding the upcoming Surface Transportation Board (STB) hearing on rail competition. I believe it is critically important to maintain balanced economic regulations of freight railroads and appreciate your attention to this matter.

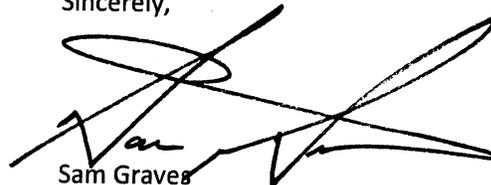
The United States has the most efficient, affordable and environmentally-friendly freight rail network in the world. With 140,000 miles of track carrying almost two trillion ton-miles annually, freight rail is an immense jobs generator and a major driver of our nation's economy.

The passage of the *Staggers Act* in 1980 created a balanced regulatory system that has allowed the rail industry to build the world's best freight rail system. Since its passage, average inflation-adjusted rail rates measured by revenue per ton-mile are down over 50 percent and freight railroads have re-invested more than \$480 billion back into their operating networks. This was made possible, in large part, by the *Staggers Act* and I urge the STB to maintain the current regulatory balance.

As a Member of the Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines & Hazardous Materials please know I will oppose any policy change made by the STB which would restrict the railroads' abilities to invest, grow their networks and meet our nation's freight transportation demands.

Should you have any questions please contact me directly or Mike Matousek of my staff at (202) 225-7041 or mike.matousek@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,



Sam Graves
Member of Congress