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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

April 15, 2011

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

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Dear Chairman Elliot:

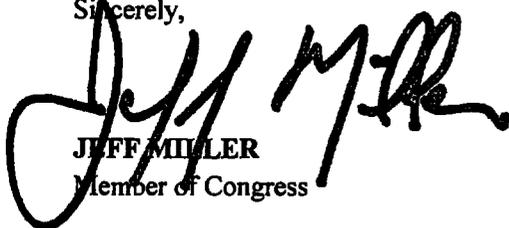
In light of the Surface Transportation Board's (STB) upcoming hearing on rail competition, I write to express my views about the vital importance of the freight rail industry to the State of Florida, and urge you to maintain the existing regulatory stability between the rail and shipping industries.

The United States has the best freight rail system in the world, and the value it provides to the Florida economy is substantial. A number of freight rail companies are headquartered in our state, including CSX, Florida East Coast Railway, and Rail America. Several short line railroads also have corporate or division headquarters in the state. In support of some of our most important industries, Florida freight railroad operators carry phosphate rock for agricultural fertilizer, stone, gravel, and sand for construction, chemicals used in manufacturing, and food products.

In sum, fourteen railroads operate in the State of Florida on nearly 2,900 miles of rail track. These companies employ 5,500 Floridians with wages and benefits averaging \$94,000 a year. The Staggers Act of 1980, which created the regulatory framework under which the rail industry operates, allowed these Florida companies to grow and to prosper. The regulatory balance set forth under the Staggers Act is the proper standard for the rail industry, and I oppose any policy changes by the STB that would limit railroads' ability to invest in Florida or in their company's continued success.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from the STB on how it will ensure the sustained growth and vitality of the freight rail industry.

Sincerely,



JEFF MILLER
Member of Congress

JM/cs