

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

December 12, 2013

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

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Dear Chairman Elliott:

We are writing to bring your attention to a transportation issue that potentially has great impact on our region of Mississippi. The STB will soon be considering whether the Grenada Railway may continue to embargo or abandon a segment of its rail line in our state. The Grenada Railway is a short line that currently runs from Memphis, Tennessee, through both of our Congressional districts, to Canton, Mississippi. It is a vital transportation path for the businesses that operate in this area, linking them to major rail lines at both Memphis and Canton.

There are two segments of the line, the northern segment running from Memphis to Grenada, Mississippi, and the southern segment running from Grenada to Canton. Unfortunately, the southern segment is not currently in operation. Some time ago, Grenada Railway sought to abandon the southern line, but dropped that request after meeting opposition. However, they then filed for an embargo on the southern segment due to a bridge problem. The embargo has expired, but Grenada Railway has not either fixed the bridge or restarted traffic on the southern segment. Thus, all rail traffic, including cargo headed to southern destinations, must use the northern segment to Memphis before being able to connect to a rail line headed south. This has significantly increased costs and delivery times for shippers on the Grenada rail line.

More recently, Grenada Railway has lowered the weight limits on the northern line, requiring shippers to use shorter rail cars that carry less product, thus significantly increasing shipping costs. Again, "bridge issues" were cited as the cause. It is our understanding that the northern segment of the Grenada Railway has approximately 130 bridges, many of them in need of repair.

The status of the northern segment is very important to keep in mind as you consider the fate of the southern segment. Our constituents are very concerned that infrastructure needs may well cause the closing of the northern segment at some point in the future. Therefore, it is absolutely vital that the southern segment remain operational.

Once a rail line is abandoned and the track pulled up, it is virtually impossible to resume rail service in the future. Given the increasing over-crowded conditions of our highways, it is essential that we

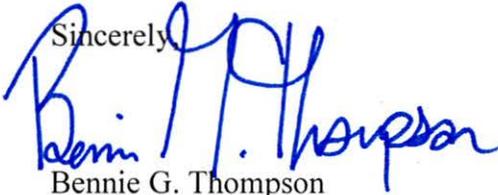
maintain the option of rail service in our state and our districts. It is vital to the economic growth of Mississippi and the businesses that operate in our state.

We would ask that you look at the entire Grenada Railway line, both northern and southern segments, in considering the embargo or abandonment of any one segment of the line. It is our understanding that there may well be other entities willing to operate and grow the Grenada rail line. We believe that a fully functional railway operating both segments of the Grenada rail line is the ultimate best outcome and one that we hope you will work to achieve.

As you consider these options, please keep in mind the importance of the rail line, not just to shippers, but to the customers, employees, and related businesses that depend on this railroad. In fact, the economic future of this entire region of Mississippi is very much dependent upon the continued operation of the Grenada rail line.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and we look forward to discussing this matter with you further.

Sincerely,



Bennie G. Thompson  
Member of Congress



Alan Nunnelee  
Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable Ann D. Begeman  
The Honorable Francis P. Mulvey