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Mr. Daniel Elliott  
Chairman  
U.S. Surface Transportation Board  
395 E Street SW  
Washington, DC 20423

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Public Record

Dear Chairman Elliott,

As Chief Executive Officer of the Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce, I am writing to express concern about the Surface Transportation Board's effort to implement burdensome new regulations which would undermine the financial health and stability of our nation's rail network.

The Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce represents over 2000 businesses in Southeastern Virginia. Collectively, we believe our economy must maintain and strengthen essential variables which impact our economy. Railroads play a particularly important role in that regard. As such, policymakers at the local, state and federal level must do their part to ensure we maintain a healthy rail sector to benefit the overall economy.

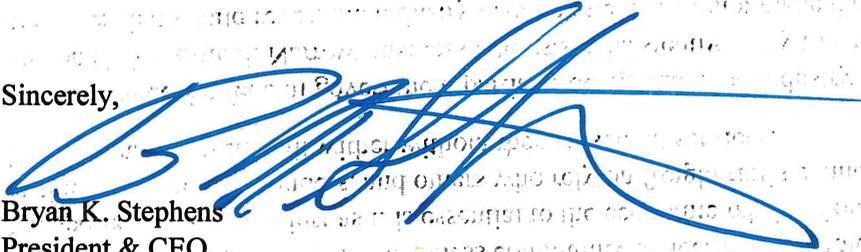
As you know, the ability of our business community to access affordable, efficient freight rail transportation is vital – just as it is essential to the economic fabric of our great nation. The small businesses, service providers, and others who rely on freight rail's connections to domestic and international markets will wither without these essential services.

Yet ever since the federal government partially deregulated the industry in 1980, it is as though railroads live on shaky ground. Narrow business interests consistently lobby the government to impose stringent measures that would revert the industry back to one that cannot make day-to-day decisions on its own.

The proposed STB rule would require railroads to open their privately owned and maintained lines to competitors at a price dictated by the government. This would be like forcing your friend to give you login credentials to Netflix and you only pay a fraction of the total cost. It is misguided and will cause significant disruption to the efficient rail network that much of our economy depends on.

I urge the board to reevaluate these unnecessary, onerous regulations and consider the negative impacts they could have on commerce and businesses in Hampton Roads and across the nation. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Bryan K. Stephens  
President & CEO  
Hampton Roads Chamber

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