

Mississippi Railroad Association, P. O. Box 1663, Jackson, MS 39215-1663

October 31, 2016

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

Mrs. Ann D. Begeman
Board Member
U.S. Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street SW
Washington, DC 20423

EP 711 (Sub-No. 1)
241985

Mrs. Deb Miller
Vice Chairman
U.S. Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street SW
Washington, DC 20423

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November 8, 2016
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Dear Chairman Elliott, Vice Chairman Miller and Member Begeman:

I am writing to express my deep concern about the Surface Transportation Board's proposed railroad access regulations and their potential adverse effect on Mississippi's rail network. This state is blessed to have a robust freight rail network that includes five Class 1 and twenty-two Shortline railroads that operate on over 2,400 miles of mainline track. Mississippi businesses and industries, located in both cities and rural communities, are dependent upon rail operations to remain competitive. In addition, our state's three blue water and the majority of our twelve brown water ports utilize rail for their success.

Our state suffered in the years prior to the *Staggers Rail Act of 1980* because over-regulation pushed the rail ecosystem to the brink of total collapse. *Staggers*, however, created today's balanced regulatory framework which has enabled railroads to serve its customers while investing billions back into their networks. This balanced regulatory environment has successfully created the most efficient and cost-effective freight rail network in the world. Additionally, through a merit based grant program, our state is providing additional funds to further strengthen our state's rail system. Please understand, Mississippi's economic viability is dependent on having a reliable and uninterrupted access to efficient freight transportation.

I urge the board to carefully consider the potentially disruptive effects of these proposed regulations and the impact they would have here in Mississippi and throughout the nation.

Sincerely,



Joel Yelverton
Executive Director
Mississippi Railroad Association

OFFICE OF CHAIRMAN
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