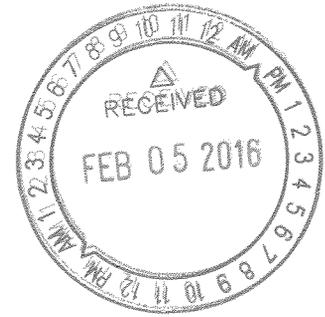


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February 4, 2016

Surface Transportation Board
Attn: Docket No. EP 526 (Sub-No. 7)
395 E Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20423-0001

Re: Nomination to STB's RSTAC Committee

This letter is in support of the nomination of George Avery Grimes, PE, PhD, of Patriot Rail Company LLC ('Patriot Rail') for the short line railroad vacancy for the Railroad-Shipper Transportation Advisory Council ('RSTAC').

Avery was essential in the transformation of Patriot into a world-class company and serves as my senior advisor ('Senior Advisor to the CEO'). As Deputy CEO at Metrolink (Los Angeles Commuter Rail), he was also essential to the transformation of Metrolink following a disastrous crash (Chatsworth) that put that company in a downward spiral.

Avery is an experienced rail executive having served in senior positions with short lines, commuter railroads and Class 1 railroads. He is especially familiar with the many issues faced by the shortline industry, and is well respected among his peers. He represents Patriot on BNSF's Shortline Caucus and Union Pacific Shortline Advisory Group ('SLAG'). He serves as Chair of UP's SLAG, a position that he was elected to by the many shortlines that serve UP.

Avery has a number of other unique qualifications that make him an excellent candidate. He has served as Chair of the Transportation Research Board's Committee on Freight Rail Transportation (AR040) for the past 6 years. In this role, he has built a broad coalition of members from the Class I and shortline industry, State DOTs, rail-oriented Academia, and national organizations such as AAR, ASLRRRA, FRA, and STB; and most recently won a blue ribbon award for the committee's outreach programs.

He is distinctively familiar with rail regulatory issues, rail economics and operations, and the importance of cooperative approaches to issues of the rail industry and its customers. He has served as an expert witness before the Board representing both shippers and railroads, as well as working with shippers and railroads to amicably resolve their differences, avoiding costly and time-consuming litigation. He has testified before the Board (2009) on new economic theories regarding rail investment. He has a BSCE in railroad engineering, MSCE in rail environmental engineering, and a Doctorate from the University of Illinois – Urbana-Champaign in Railroad engineering, economics and finance.

I believe that he would be an excellent choice to fill the short line vacancy on the RSTAC as his experience and temperament make him an excellent candidate.

I appreciate your willingness to consider Dr. George Avery Grimes for the small railroad vacancy and would be glad to provide additional information if needed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John E. Fenton".

John E. Fenton

President and Chief Executive Officer