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& THE WORKFORCE

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June 9, 2011

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

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Dear Chairman Elliott:

We are writing to express our opposition to changes in federal regulations that would restrict the ability of America's freight railroads to continue to make the investments required to grow and modernize our rail network and meet growing demands for freight transportation. As the Surface Transportation Board prepares for its scheduled June 22, 2011 hearing on rail regulatory issues, we ask that you keep our views in mind.

The smart, reasonable and commonsense regulatory framework created via the Staggers Rail Act of 1980 has been an overwhelming success and transformed the U.S. freight rail network. What had been an over-regulated, deteriorating, and largely failing industry is now the best freight rail system in the world. U.S. freight railroads have made great strides in safety and fuel efficiency and significantly reduced emissions. At the same time, the industry has nearly doubled the amount of traffic they move while also reducing rates for shippers. It is important to note that average rail rates are roughly half what they were in 1980.

Maintaining the reasonable regulatory structure of the Staggers Act is especially critical now, as the nation continues to recover from the worst recession in 80 years. Freight railroads have invested more than \$480 billion in private capital back into the rail network since 1980. Railroads anticipate investing another \$12 billion in 2011 alone. These infusions of private capital into the rail network are critical to supporting job growth and our economic recovery.

Transportation experts are united in predicting massive increases in freight movements over the next 20 years. It is imperative that our rail network be positioned to handle a large share of the burden. We therefore urge you, as Chairman of the Surface Transportation Board, to ensure that no new regulations are imposed on railroads that would in any way inhibit the level of investment needed to sustain and create jobs, boost the economy, and meet growing freight transportation demand.

Sincerely,


Richard L. Hanna
Member of Congress


Richard E. Neal
Member of Congress

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