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March 30, 2011

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

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Dear Chairman Elliot,

There is no question in my mind that the freight rail system is of significant benefit economically to our region. Many of our nearly 250 member businesses use the rail system to move both raw materials and finished goods to and from our community. We rely on local and national service providers to work with these businesses to provide strong service and reinvest in infrastructure needs.

We at Great River Economic Development Foundation support a healthy freight rail network that encourages reinvestment by the rail industry, supports job growth and continued economic recovery. We oppose any policy or regulatory changes that would hinder the freight railroads' ability to continue investing billions of dollars annually in private capital to grow and modernize the nation's rail infrastructure.

Anything that negatively impacts the existing freight rail system would have significant negative economic and quality of life consequence for us. Therefore, we respectfully request that no regulatory or policy changes be pursued at this time by the STB. We need to maintain the strong and well-balanced regulatory regime we have in place today.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Mentesti".

Jim Mentesti  
President