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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-2002

June 9, 2011

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

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Office of Procurement
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Dear Chairman Elliot:

I am writing to express my support to maintain a strong freight railroad system for Maryland, the Washington region and throughout the nation.

I am very proud of Baltimore's rich rail history that dates back to when construction began on the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad in 1828. The B&O was the first common carrier railroad and Baltimore's Carrollton Viaduct was the B&O's first bridge. Today it is the world's oldest railroad bridge still in use. The Thomas Viaduct in Relay, Maryland, was the longest bridge in the United States upon its completion in 1835, and it also remains in use as do many other bridges from that time.

The rail industry's ability to reinvest in their networks has not only allowed these bridges to remain in service, but have enabled additional investments to further modify infrastructure to keep the Baltimore/Washington region economically competitive. As the 8th largest consumption market in the United States these investments play a critical role in how we will move goods and people through the region efficiently and safely.

Today, there are 9 freight railroads that operate in Maryland, over almost 1,000 route miles, and moved over 6 million tons of freight last year. These companies employ over 1,600 Maryland residents, with average salary and benefits of \$95,400. There are an additional 8,900 railroad retirees that reside in the state.

I value the role of freight rail in aiding in the revitalization of our economy. This investment keeps our communities safe, enhances our infrastructure and connectivity, maintains our ability to compete, and creates jobs in Maryland. I urge you to keep these key concerns in mind as you hold hearings to review the economic regulations under which freight railroads currently operate.

Thank you for your attention and consideration to my concerns.

Sincerely,



C.A. Dutch Ruppertsberger
Member of Congress

CADR:dh