



**MICHIGAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

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November 26, 2008

Ms. Anne K. Quinlan, Acting Secretary  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
Surface Transportation Board  
395 E Street, S. W.  
Washington, D.C. 20423-0001

Dear Ms. Quinlan:

This is an urgent request to stay action by the Surface Transportation Board (STB) on a proposal from Watco Companies that we believe would adversely impact the rail transportation options for businesses in northwest Michigan. By acting on a stay to this proposal today, November 26, 2008, you will give the companies affected time to voice their opinions.

If you do not stay this action, the STB will automatically approve a proposal for Watco Companies to lease just the Grand Rapids-Elkhart segment of the Norfolk Southern rail line through a Watco subsidiary, Grand Elk Railroad, LLC. This would effectively eliminate one of Marquette Rail's Class I rail connection at Grand Rapids, the Norfolk Southern connection at Grand Rapids. That connection is currently being used by large manufacturers in northwest Michigan. This action would pose economic threats to existing as well as future companies that are dependent upon reliable, cost-effective rail transportation for their viability.

Please stay action on this proposal to preserve rail access options for businesses in northwest Michigan.

Sincerely,

James C. Epollito  
President and CEO

cc: Renee Ihlenfeldt, Executive Director, Alliance For Economic Success  
Julie Van Dyke, President and CEO, Mason County Growth Alliance  
Kevin Ruble, President and CEO, Marquette Rail, LLC

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