

**OPENING STATEMENT OF
SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD VICE CHAIRMAN
ANN D. BEGEMAN**

Competition in the Railroad Industry, Docket No. EP 705

June 22, 2011

I want to begin by commending Chairman Elliott for his leadership in calling this hearing on Competition in the Rail Industry. This hearing was announced long before I joined the Board last month, and I applaud the Chairman and Commissioner Mulvey for recognizing the importance of taking a fresh, comprehensive look at this important issue.

I am glad to see that so many stakeholders have taken the time to participate in this proceeding. I have had the opportunity to meet with many of you over the years on various rail transportation matters. There are also many of you I have not met, and I am looking forward to hearing from all of you.

I am not one who believes that all Board policies and regulations are perfect. At the same time, however, any changes that might be considered must be fully and formally vetted prior to implementation.

As you know, the Senate Commerce Committee has looked at many of these issues over the past years and relied heavily on stakeholder input in developing legislation. Your input here is equally important.

I hope that all of you will approach this hearing in an effort to be constructive—not to simply defend or oppose the status quo, but to inform the Board how specific proposals might reconcile, at least in some ways, the concerns of both captive shippers and large carriers.

Again, I thank the Chairman and look forward to hearing from the witnesses.