



SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

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Contact:
Michael Booth
202-245-1760
FedRelay 1-800-877-8339

STB CHAIRMAN RESPONDS TO AAR'S LETTER OF CONCERN ABOUT RETAC, REITERATES HIS SUPPORT FOR CANDID AND ROBUST STAKEHOLDER DISCUSSIONS

Surface Transportation Board Chairman Martin J. Oberman today responded to concerns raised by the Association of American Railroads (AAR) about subjects discussed at the Spring 2023 meeting of the STB's Rail Energy Transportation Advisory Committee (RETAC). Chairman Oberman rejected AAR's assertions that RETAC's discussions impermissibly involved matters pending before the Board and ancillary topics, and strongly reiterated his support for RETAC as an important and valuable stakeholder resource for Board member engagement on current issues related to the rail transportation of energy resources. Chairman Oberman noted that while RETAC's charter focuses on energy products, such as coal, ethanol and petroleum products, it is inevitable that the committee's discussions will encompass broader issues, such as rail service reliability, workforce levels, safety issues and industry financial matters.

“[A]s AAR and other rail interests constantly and accurately assert, the railroads are a ‘network,’ where performance in one area or with respect to one type of commodity almost always affects or is related to performance in other areas,” Chairman Oberman noted. “Indeed, it would be unwise for the Board to attempt to artificially limit or cut-off discussion by RETAC members. I have no intention of stifling a full and free discussion of rail service and the status of the freight rail network during RETAC meetings.”

The Chairman's letter to AAR may be viewed and downloaded [here](#).

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