

### **Rail Consumer Assistance Program Addresses 120 Public Inquiries in 2004**

Surface Transportation Board Chairman Roger Nober today announced that the Board's Rail Consumer Assistance Program helped 120 rail consumers and other entities with their inquiries and complaints during its fourth year. The inquiries and complaints concerned such issues as rates and other charges, car supply and other service issues, claims for damages and related services, employee concerns, and community issues. Initiated in 2000, the Program has become one of the agency's most successful forums for the private-sector resolution of problems experienced by consumers of railroad transportation service and other affected parties.

Managed by the agency's Office of Compliance and Enforcement (OCE), the Program provides direct consumer access by a nationwide toll-free telephone number, **(866) 254-1792**; by fax, at phone number **(202) 565-9011**; via an e-mail address, at [RailConsumer@stb.dot.gov](mailto:RailConsumer@stb.dot.gov); and via regular mail at the address below:

**Rail Consumer Assistance Unit  
c/o Office of Compliance and Enforcement  
Surface Transportation Board  
1925 K St., N.W., Suite 780  
Washington, DC 20423-0001**

Additional information is provided via a "**Rail Consumer**" button on the agency's home page, at [www.stb.dot.gov](http://www.stb.dot.gov). OCE is committed to its goal of bringing to the attention of involved railroads all consumer issues communicated to it within hours of the receipt of such communications so that railroads and parties may quickly be brought together to address such issues.

In making this announcement, Chairman Nober also indicated that he and his fellow Members will continue to forward to OCE all matters pertinent to the Program so that such matters will receive the same expeditious handling as those brought directly to OCE.

A fact sheet is attached.

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#### **ATTACHMENT**

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Fact Sheet

#### **THE SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD'S RAIL CONSUMER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

Initiated in November 2000, the Board's consumer program was established to enhance the STB's ability to assist rail consumers informally with disputes or problems they are unable to resolve directly with the railroads from which they receive service, or by which they are affected. The Program provides a practical and productive means of actualizing the STB's preference for informal, private-sector dispute resolution wherever possible. In addition, it aids in the STB's identification of rail-consumer issues, develops problem-solving approaches other than costly litigation, enhances improves communication among the various segments of the rail transportation industry, and promotes rail-service improvements. Since the Program's inception, it has successfully handled more that 425 rail-service consumer matters.

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