

United States Senate

February 25, 2020

COMMITTEES:
ARMED SERVICES
COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND
TRANSPORTATION
JUDICIARY
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

The Honorable Ann D. Begeman
Chairman
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20423

The Honorable Martin J. Oberman
Board Member
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW 300457
Washington, DC 20423

The Honorable Patrick J. Fuchs
Vice Chairman
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20423

ENTERED
Office of Proceedings
March 2, 2020
Part of
Public Record

Dear Chairman Begeman, Vice Chairman Fuchs, and Commissioner Oberman:

I write regarding the Surface Transportation Board's (STB) proposals related to revenue adequacy, Docket No. EP 722. As you continue to work on this issue and discuss it among your staff, I urge you to maintain a balanced economic framework that recognizes the importance of the freight rail system to the U.S. economy.

Freight rail is vital to the economy, and Tennessee is ranked in the top 15 for freight railroads, rail tons, freight rail employment, and freight rail wages by state. Our farmers, businesses, and families rely on the goods transported throughout the state via rail. Without the presence of freight rail, rural Tennesseans would have less access to markets they need to grow and succeed.

I appreciate the STB's efforts to make itself more efficient and transparent for shippers and railroads. That being said, I am worried this proposal could have unintended effects on the rail network and the shippers they continue to serve. Freight rail operators depend on consistency in order to invest an average of \$25 billion annually to maintain and improve their operations. I ask the STB to consider any economic implications of this pending proceeding and the impact it could have on railroads and shippers alike.

Thank you for your time and consideration on this important matter. I appreciate your continued partnership to ensure a safe and reliable rail system in Tennessee and across the country.

Sincerely,



Marsha Blackburn
United States Senator