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17 March 2021

Ms. Cynthia T. Brown
Chief of the Section of Administration, Office of Proceedings
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20423

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ENTERED
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Part of
Public Record

RE: Docket No. FD 36472 CSX Corporation and CSX
Transportation, Inc.-Control and Merger-Pan Am Systems, et. al.

Dear Ms. Brown,

My name is Russell Barber, Director and President of Maine Rail Group, Inc., located in Augusta Maine.

Maine Rail Group, Inc. (MRG) is a non-profit organization working to enhance rail service in Maine and New England. MRG was founded in 1988 to help save the former Maine Central "Lower Road" main line between Brunswick and Augusta from abandonment. That effort was successful; the State of Maine owns the route and leases sections to operators.

As an independent all-volunteer group, MRG promotes awareness of the railroad industry's contributions to Maine's economy and its important role in moving passengers and freight. It advocates for railroad utilization and encourages preservation and productive use of Maine's rail system and its regional connections. We are currently advocating legislative action (LD-227) for a feasibility study of the extension of passenger service from Brunswick through Augusta and Waterville to Bangor. Passage of this bill is the first step in restoring the state-owned rail corridor from Brunswick to Augusta, Maine and then on Pan Am's line from East Augusta to Waterville and Bangor. We do hope CSX will not only continue to support the Downeaster service, but also the possible expansion of passenger rail along this 100-mile corridor.

The MRG supports the CSX filing with the STB to acquire PAR and related companies. CSXT's proposed infrastructure investments in the Freight Main Line from the NH/ME border east to Mattawamkeag is consistent with the goals of the MRG and will provide expedited service for all commodities as compared to the current PAR operation. This could open up intermodal service between the Port of Saint John, New Brunswick via haulage rights over the Eastern Maine Railway and the New Brunswick Railway, and U.S. points.

The resurgence of the Maine forest products industry should be enhanced by higher velocity (and hopefully more economical rates) with single-carrier service to all of the 23-state region of the Eastern United States and two Canadian Provinces which are served by CSXT. This should result in increased competition and expansion of market areas.

Per CSXT's filing, CSXT has committed to work with AMTK and the Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority (manager of the Downeaster Service) to finance and install the installation of PTC (I-ETMS) from the MA/NH border, where PTC (ACSES) currently ends, all the way to Brunswick ME, the current terminus of the Downeaster. Installation of this extension of PTC will permit NNEPRA to increase the round-trip train frequencies between Brunswick ME and Boston-North Station MA to meet increasing demand.

Accordingly, the Maine Rail Group, Inc. supports the proposed control and merger application by CSXT of PAR and subordinate companies, as it will benefit both freight and passenger service in the State.

Submitted on Behalf of the MRG Board,

Russell Barber
President, Maine Rail Group, Inc.

Cc: Parties of record