

STATE SENATOR KEVIN AVARD

District 12

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To Members of the United States Surface Transportation Board:

As an elected representative of the people of Senate District 12, it is my job to ensure that our community and our state are as well positioned for a sound and prosperous future as possible. My strong support for the proposed merger between CSX and Pan Am Railways is rooted in this sense of duty, and I am writing today to ask that those charged with reviewing the merits of the merger do so with a clear understanding of its importance to New Hampshire's future.

New Hampshire, like the rest of New England and indeed the rest of the nation, looks to railroads to keep both freight and passengers moving and the economy running smoothly. Rail has been part of the bedrock of commerce and industry for generations, capable of delivering reliable and affordable service to companies and consumers alike. The system has served us well over the years, and that is to Pan Am's credit. That said, when presented with an opportunity to give our railroads a significant upgrade, I believe it is important to speak up and make sure we're doing all we can to ensure the opportunity doesn't pass us by.

American railroads have evolved considerably in recent years, becoming more reliable, more environmentally friendly, more efficient, and generally better equipped to serve the modern economy. This transformation has been led by CSX and other national Class One railroads, and the proposed merger will enable my state to more fully leverage all that modern rail infrastructure has to offer. Because while our current railroads function, they don't do so at their maximum potential. This merger – and the billions in capital investment CSX will bring to New England rail upon approval – will take our regional rail infrastructure from "good enough" to "best in class."

Approval will spark direct investment into our economy that will pay dividends across sectors for years to come. As these funds are put to work, we will quickly begin to move toward fundamental improvements that enable us to move more freight at higher speeds, at a lower cost, and on a more reliable schedule. The merger is a chance to comprehensively upgrade the performance of one of our most important pieces of transportation infrastructure, ensuring that New Hampshire's rail system is ready not just for today, but for the future as well.

This will be accomplished by putting the best of today's rail sector to work for New Hampshire. For instance, next generation technology like positive train control will improve the safety of rail operations on routes that are shared by freight and passenger trains. CSX's industry-leading operating model will provide shippers with much greater reliability. This new dependability will help companies plan, keep logistics and operations smooth, and improve on-time deliveries. Stronger, upgraded tracks will enable trains to become more efficient, moving faster and carrying more freight. This will shorten delivery timelines. As such changes come to fruition, shipping costs will decrease – good news for shippers and receivers. And as CSX continues to invest more deeply in our community, they'll also phase old locomotives out, bringing in new units that deliver more power while also emitting less carbon and burning less fuel.

As the review period continues, I hope that the Surface Transportation Board will closely consider these benefits. I also hope that strong support from the communities that stand to be impacted will factor in

the decision. I sought office to do all I could to help build a stronger New Hampshire. This merger will contribute to that goal. I fully and enthusiastically support the merger.

Thank you,
Kevin Avar
State Senate, District 12