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

March 14, 2022

Dear Chairman Oberman and Members of the Surface Transportation Board,

Indiana is truly the “Crossroads of America” with 75% of the country's population within a day's drive. We host an integrated intermodal network of ships, planes, trucks, and trains that stretches from Lake Michigan to the Ohio River. Maintaining the efficiency of this integrated network is vital to supporting our economic strengths in advanced manufacturing, agriculture, mining, and trade.

It is in this context that we write to oppose a policy (EP 711-1) that would diminish an integral piece of our transportation network. Indiana houses 43 freight railroads—the fourth most in the nation—and over 4,000 miles of rail, with the trains operating across those tracks moving 340 million tons of freight annually. On the passenger front, Indiana has 10 Amtrak stations and regular service to Chicago and New York.

Freight railroads are an American success story and provide a valuable lesson in the transformational impact of smart regulation. Since rail companies were able to enter the private marketplace in 1980, they’ve reinvested over \$740 billion in private capital back into their infrastructure while holding rates shippers pay for rail service at an average 44% lower than they were in 1981 (when adjusted for inflation).

We hope the STB will oppose unnecessary interventions that subvert railroads’ control of rates and routes and instead embrace policies that allow this American success story to continue. Railroads purposely concentrate and move traffic along certain routes to maximize operational efficiencies and network fluidity. These routing practices, honed over decades, consider the health and operation of the entire network, which benefits all customers.

Businesses across Indiana rely on swift, predictable shipping options to meet their customers' requirements. Removing network and switching control from the railroads will compromise efficiency, increase delivery times, and negatively impact a logistical network that is currently struggling to meet demand. With truck driver shortages and ports struggling to process freight, we urge you not to risk disrupting the most reliable component of the logistics system.

Freight demand is expected to grow 30% nationally by 2040, and all modes of transportation will be asked to move more. Indiana was the first in the nation to establish a Railroad Grade Crossing Fund to address rail highway crossing congestion. We’ve invested heavily in making our integrated network more efficient and cannot afford federal mandates that undermine our long-

term plans. We urge the Board to oppose the proposed rule on forced reciprocal switching (EP 711-1).

Sincerely,

Hon. Todd Barton
Mayor
City of Crawfordsville

Hon. Don Brunson
Trustee
Franklin Township

Hon. Dennis Buckley
Mayor
City of Beech Grove

Donna Christian
Executive Director
Shelby County Chamber of Commerce

Hon. Richard Hickman
Mayor
City of Angola

Hon. Scott Long
Mayor
City of Wabash

Hon. Bob McCoy
Mayor
City of Winchester

Hon. Sherry Riggins
Commissioner
Delaware County

CC: Indiana Congressional Delegation