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Chairman Martin Oberman
Surface Transportation Board
395 E. Street SW
Washington DC 20423

RE: Docket # FD36496

Dear Mr. Oberman,

I'm a retired senior living on a fixed income, and very concerned about the devastating impacts of climate change. Climate scientists warn us that our CO2 emissions must peak by 2025 and rapidly fall thereafter if we're going to meet our goal of passing on a livable planet to future generations. Passenger rail service plays a vital role in meeting that challenge. I have had the good fortune to travel on many trains around the world (including Europe, Egypt, Malaysia, Russia and Siberia, China and throughout the U.S.) and I know that a clean, efficient rail service is a boon for the quality of life of both passengers and the communities through which it traverses.

Amtrak's network today is smaller than it was in 1971 despite 120 million more people in this country. The current application under consideration by the Surface Transportation Board (STB) to increase passenger rail service on the Gulf Coast represents an important bellwether for the future of passenger rail service in the United States. With the recent bipartisan support for \$75 billion earmarked for expansion of passenger rail service, we have a wonderful opportunity to reinvigorate rail ridership.

I understand the STB's key inquiry is whether Amtrak can operate those additional passenger trains without unreasonably impairing freight transportation. Respectfully, I would reframe the inquiry as -- how can the U.S. provide both freight and passenger rail service in an equitable and efficient manner for all parties? The false competition between freight and passenger rail service is a 20th century relic. In the twenty-first century, new challenges such as climate change and a growing population require new thinking. We most certainly can find a solution to support the needs of freight and passenger rail service.

Thank you for your service and leadership on the Surface Transportation Board.

Sincerely,



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cc. All parties of record