



Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO

February 2, 2024

EP 774 (Sub-No. 1)
307929

The Honorable Martin Oberman
Chairman
Surface Transportation Board
395 E St., SW
Washington, DC 20423-0001

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Dear Chair Oberman:

On behalf of the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD) and the entirety of freight rail labor, we write in support of Husein Cumber's application to serve on the Passenger Rail Advisory Committee (PRAC) for a seat reserved for a representative from existing intercity passenger rail operators other than Amtrak, or developers of new intercity passenger rail lines other than Amtrak. Husein has a unique combination of experience working with both freight and passenger railroads in both the public and private sectors. Given the PRAC's heavy focus on the interactions and potential conflicts between passenger railroads and host railroads, Husein's credentials make him an ideal candidate for the PRAC seat.

Husein currently serves as the Chief Strategy Officer for Florida East Coast Industries, the indirect parent company to Brightline Holdings. In his current role, Husein has played a central part in the development of Brightline Florida's Orlando to Miami rail line, which is the first privately owned and operated intercity passenger rail system in the United States in over 100 years. Husein has also been closely involved with the Brightline West high-speed rail line project that will connect Las Vegas, NV to Los Angeles, CA and be the first privately owned true high-speed rail line when it opens before the 2028 Olympics. Prior to his current role, Husein worked for the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) from 2005-2009 where he served as an Assistant to the Secretary for Policy and as Deputy Chief of Staff at the U.S. Department of Transportation and became an expert in transportation policy. During his tenure as Deputy Chief of Staff, Husein was part of the leadership team that oversaw daily operations of the USDOT's 60,000 employees and managed a \$67 billion budget. He also previously was President of H.A. Cumber & Company where he had several rail focused clients, including G.E. Transportation and R.J. Corman Railroad Group,

Rail Labor's relationship with Husein allows the coalition to place trust in him and support him through the nomination process. On his own accord, Husein sought out and fomented relationships with all stakeholders, including rail labor, during the Brightline West project. Unions are too often an afterthought to the railroads and their plans. Instead, Husein treated Rail Labor as a valuable partner instead of an adversary or a box to check off. As a direct result of his efforts, Rail Labor and Brightline West entered the first of its kind Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) covering the operations and maintenance of the Brightline West high-speed rail trains. Our MOU is novel, as it honors workers' right to organize and ensures that employees of both Brightline West and its contractors will be covered by the bedrock of federal rail labor statutes, namely the Railway Labor Act, the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act and the Railroad Retirement Act. In fact, the Brightline West MOU is so novel that it established the model for Rail Labor's partnerships with other high-speed rail projects in the United States, including the subsequent MOU that Rail Labor reached with the California High-Speed Rail Authority (CAHSRA) for the California high-speed rail project.

A renaissance of passenger rail is unfolding in the United States, with a record amount of interest and funding in expanding service. Part of that renaissance is due to Brightline's successful operation in Florida as well as its efforts to advance the Brightline West high-speed rail project. Given Brightline's key role in expanding

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Greg Regan, President / Shari Semelsberger, Secretary-Treasurer



passenger rail in the U.S. and its expertise balancing passenger and freight rail operations in Florida, we believe it is critical that Brightline has a representative on the PRAC. On behalf of the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO, we give full support to Husein Cumber serving on the PRAC for a seat reserved for a representative from existing intercity passenger rail operators other than Amtrak, or developers of new intercity passenger rail lines other than Amtrak.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. Regan", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Greg Regan, President
Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO