

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD**Filing: Docket. No. EP774**

This filing is a statement of sincere interest to serve on the Surface Transportation Board's Passenger Rail Advisory Committee (PRAC). The information below briefly describes my qualifications. It would be an honor to serve on the Committee as an unbiased, at-large member with a deep understanding of the passenger rail business and appreciation of its policy issues from many perspectives.

(1) Ripley Watson III

Business Contact Information: retired from multiple rail industry positions, with decades of experience reporting on STB activities for Bloomberg News, Journal of Commerce and other publications. The complete summary of experience and qualifications appears in (3) below.

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(2) Intend to serve as a knowledgeable, unbiased at-large member with strong qualifications.

(3) My relevant knowledge of passenger rail/ Amtrak in particular includes multiple relevant skills.

I have written knowledgeably and fairly about Amtrak for Bloomberg News, the Journal of Commerce and other trade publications for more than 25 years. This experience has made me extremely familiar with, and appreciative of, the complexity of U.S. passenger rail. This experience will be very valuable as an at-large representative because I have a broad range of knowledge and a commitment to objectivity that other candidates may not offer. My public policy experience includes extensive reporting about the STB, other agencies and Congress. This will provide the PRAC with a deep appreciation for the realities of the regulatory agenda and the multitude of interests to be considered in evaluating every issue.

Another important part of my experience is working at CSX and at the Intermodal Association of North America. This experience in staff positions provides the STB with someone who has inside knowledge of the freight rail industry, as well as an appreciation for its vital role in providing a level of service that passenger rail customers deserve, but have not been receiving.

I have ridden nearly every mile of Amtrak, including multiple trips on many portions. I also have spent more than 20 years commuting between the Baltimore area and Washington D.C. This experience provides the STB with someone who has first-hand knowledge of passenger rail as a rider of long-distance, medium distance and local rail service.

I'm prepared to provide references and recommendations as needed. I also will provide any quantity of articles that you require in order to demonstrate my knowledge, fairness and accurate assessments of passenger rail.

(4) I agree to serve as an at-large representative on the PRAC for any available term.

(5) Not applicable.

