



ASSOCIATION OF COMMUTER RAIL EMPLOYEES

March 11, 2024

308074

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

ENTERED
Office of Proceedings
March 11, 2024
Part of
Public Record

**Re: Nomination of Justin Vonashek for the Passenger Rail Advisory Committee
Docket #EP7741**

Dear Mr. Oberman:

I am writing on behalf of the Association of Commuter Rail Employees ("ACRE"), who represents nearly 2,000 employees at Metro-North Railroad ("MNR") across various operating departments, including Conductors, Locomotive Engineers, Yardmasters, Rail Traffic Controllers, Power Directors, and Signalmen to support the nomination of Justin Vonashek, MNR's Executive Vice President & Chief Operating Officer, as a member of the Passenger Rail Advisory Committee (PRAC) representing commuter rail operators.

ACRE has established an effective and collaborative partnership with Mr. Vonashek during the time in which he has been at MNR. We work very closely with Mr. Vonashek and his team to resolve issues and address labor concerns, but also to advance creative initiatives relating to railroad safety, service planning, technology, customer service, and overall commuter rail transportation operations. We believe Mr. Vonashek consistently demonstrates a willingness to partner with ACRE to improve MNR's operations and to lead the industry with both innovation and exemplary service. In doing so, Mr. Vonashek has also demonstrated to us his prioritization of important matters that impact the ACRE membership, including employee safety and well-being, while also championing the efficient and stellar rail service MNR provides to the region and that we are proud that our members support each and every day.

We understand that the purpose of the PRAC is to provide advice and guidance to the Surface Transportation Board on passenger rail issues on a continuing basis to help the Board better fulfill its statutory responsibilities in overseeing certain aspects of passenger rail service. ACRE trusts that Mr. Vonashek would be an excellent representation of commuter rail operators on the PRAC and we support the nomination submitted for your consideration.

On behalf of ACRE,

Edward Valente
Executive Board Director
Association of Commuter Rail Employees

420 Lexington Ave.
Suite 215
New York, NY 10017
212.599.5856