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309055

December 27, 2024

The Honorable John Rutherford
Member of Congress
4th Congressional District- Florida
117 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

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Dear Representative Rutherford:

The reason for this letter is to request your assistance with current legislation and a finance docket that is before the Surface Transportation Board and has been printed in the *Federal Register*.

As you know H.R. 8467 the Farm Bill is an important piece of legislation in direct relation to agriculture, markets and food. Infrastructure, finance and long-term policy is a part of this important legislation.

Attached is an example(s) of just how important this legislation is right inside your district. Several months ago, Anheuser-Busch Inc. located on North Main Street and Dunn Avenue in Jacksonville announced an \$10 million-dollar expansion to its operations at its historic brewery. I think this will be a valuable capital project for reasons ranging from regional economic development to new product directions and innovation in alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages. As you likely know a brewery like Anheuser Busch is completely dependent on both access to agriculture and a supporting infrastructure and supply chain networks to transport the needed agriculture from production to its markets.

This is why I think H.R. 8467 isn't currently a quality piece of legislation. It simply does not go far enough in support of agriculture and it's uses in these markets whether this is access to the farmer or the end users. I think this legislation needs to consider the entire market including capital needs of the market and including supply chains, commerce and risk parameters such as increased access to insurance for all market participants.

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Another concern I have about H.R. 8467 is indirect but it's still related. As you may already know the Canadian National Railway or CN has and is attempting to purchase the Iowa Northern Railway a small, regional based railroad in the heart of agriculture production in northeast Iowa.

I'm currently opposed to Finance Docket 36744 as it appears before the Surface Transportation Board for reasons ranging from the corporate history of the CN, it's implementation of Precision Scheduled Railroading, to its tariff and rate design structures to and finally I'm concerned about any foreign ownership of railroads in the United States, for any reason(s). It's been my direct experience as a former state legislator from New Hampshire bordering in the Province of Quebec that the interests of Canada are most definitely, and dangerously, are not the interests of New England and the United States.

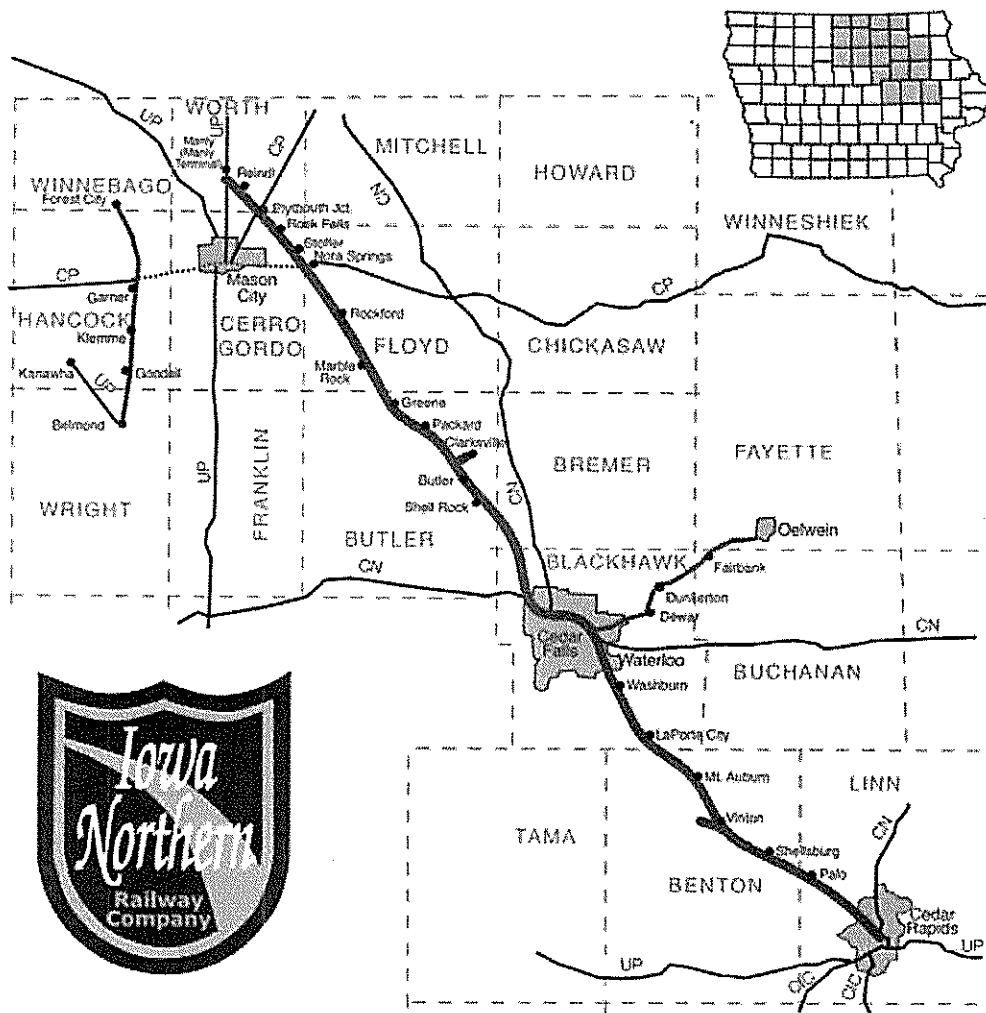
On the basis of agriculture, markets and trade I'm asking you to work on improving the substance of H.R. 8467 and oppose Finance Docket 36744 before the Surface Transportation Board.

Attachments

Sincerely

/S/ Steven Connolly

cc. Parties of Record.



Iowa Northern Railway map of its line.

Anheuser-Busch announces \$10 million in upgrades to Jacksonville brewery

The brewing company said it has invested nearly \$2 billion its facilities across the country in the last five years.

By David Crumpler | 6:23 p.m. December 2, 2024 | 4 Free Articles Remaining!



The Anheuser-Busch brewery at 111 Busch Drive in North Jacksonville.

Anheuser-Busch

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BUSINESS

Table 6. Title V, Credit

Current Law/Policy	H.R. 8467 as Ordered Reported by the Committee
Subtitle A – Farm Ownership Loans	
Eligibility requirements. Establishes that to be eligible for direct or guaranteed farm ownership loans, applicants must be individuals or certain entities engaged primarily in farming or ranching, have majority ownership, have citizenship, have sufficient training and experience, operate a farm the size of a family farm as defined by USDA, and be unable to obtain credit elsewhere at reasonable terms. A special rule allows entities that are owner-operators to be eligible if individuals that own the farm own more than 50% of the entity, or an embedded operating entity that is owned by other entities may be eligible if 75% of each embedded entity is owned by individuals that own the farm. (7 U.S.C. §1922(a))	Replaces “majority” with “at least 50 percent” for the eligibility of entities and individuals’ ownership interests. Adds to the special rules for entities that USDA may define <i>qualified operators</i> as entities that could be eligible. Changes the requirement that 75% of each embedded entity be owned by individuals that own the farm to 75% of the total interest in the entities be owned by qualified operators. (§5101)
Experience requirements. Requires three years of farming experience or other acceptable experience. Allows certain alternatives to substitute for parts of the experience requirement. (7 U.S.C. §1922(b))	Reduces the farming experience requirement to two years. Revises the list of alternatives for meeting the experience requirement by allowing “operational” responsibilities for hired farm labor and adding “other criteria established by the Secretary.” (§5102)
Conservation Loan Program. Authorizes USDA loans and loan guarantees for qualified conservation projects. Priority is given to beginning farmers or ranchers, conversion to organic or sustainable production, and practices for highly erodible land. Authorizes appropriations of \$150 million annually through FY2024. (7 U.S.C. §1924; P.L. 118-22)	Adds precision agriculture practices and technologies to the priority list. Reauthorizes appropriations at current levels through FY2029. (§5103)
Limitations on farm ownership loans. Sets the maximum individual direct loan at \$600,000. Sets the total guaranteed loan limit at \$1.75 million (adjusted for inflation after FY2019), including the amount of guaranteed farm operating loans. (7 U.S.C. §1925(a)(2))	Increases the limit on direct loans from \$600,000 to \$850,000. Increases the limit on guaranteed loans to from \$1.75 million, adjusted for inflation after FY2019 (\$2.2 million in FY2024), to \$3.5 million, adjusted for inflation after FY2025. (§5104)
Inflation adjustment. Adjusts the individual limit based on inflation using the USDA Prices Paid by Farmers Index. (7 U.S.C. §1925(c))	Changes the inflation adjustment to an index of farm real estate, cropland, and pastureland values per acre, equally weighted, as measured by USDA. (§5105)
Farm Credit System (FCS) financing for essential rural community facilities. FCS is not authorized to lend for rural community facilities. (FCS may participate in loans—for risk management purposes and subject to limits of 10% of capital limit and 50% of the loan—to entities that are not eligible but are functionally similar to eligible entities.) (12 U.S.C. §2206a)	Expands the authority of FCS to lend for essential rural community facilities, as defined in USDA Rural Development. The total of such loans may not exceed 15% of the FCS institution’s loans. FCS must offer loan participation opportunities to at least one other non-USDA lender, with priority for local rural community banks. Offers must be reported to the Farm Credit Administration (FCA). Requires annual reports to Congress. (§5106)
Down Payment Loan Program. Authorizes USDA direct loans for down payment on farm real estate if the borrower provides a 5% down payment. The maximum loan amount is 45% of the purchase price or appraised value, up to \$300,150 (45% of the \$667,000 specified in statute). (7 U.S.C. §1935(b)(1))	Removes the \$300,150 limit and makes the down payment loan subject to the overall limit on farm ownership loans in 7 U.S.C. §1925. (§5107)



The 2024 Farm Bill: H.R. 8467 Compared with Current Law

Updated December 16, 2024

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