

October 15, 2025

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Surface Transportation Board
Office of the Chief Counsel
395 E Street SW
Washington, DC 20423

ENTERED
Office of Chief Counsel
November 13, 2025
Part of
Public Record

Re: Proposed UP-NS Merger, Docket No. FD 36873

Dear Office of Chief Counsel,

My name is Adam Stewart, and I'm one of the owners of Sweet Brew, a small business based in Loxley, Alabama. We started back in 2003 as a family-run operation, and over the years we've grown into one of Alabama's more innovative food service manufacturers. Our big breakthrough was creating the Sweet Brew pouch — a simple but game-changing idea that combines fresh tea leaves and pure cane sugar into one easy-to-use brew pouch. It's helped us change how restaurants and other businesses serve sweet tea. Even though we've grown, we still think and operate like a small business — one that's proud to support our local economy and create jobs right here in our community.

That's why I'm concerned about the proposed merger between Union Pacific and Norfolk Southern. Like many businesses, we rely on rail service to get the supplies we need and to deliver our products to customers across the country. When rail service slows down or becomes unreliable, it has a real impact on our operations — and on our bottom line.

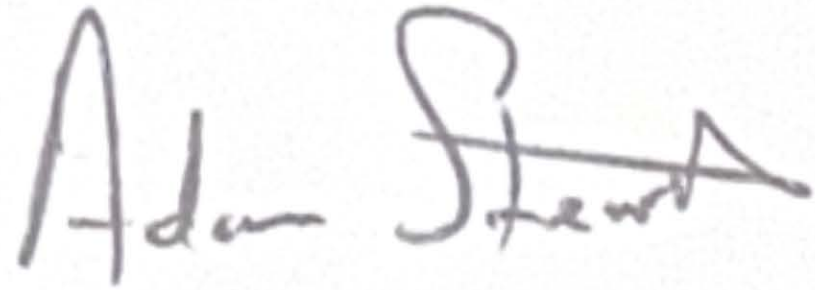
Over the years, I've seen how big mergers like this can create problems for small and mid-sized businesses. They often lead to slower service, more delays, and higher shipping costs. And in the end, those costs usually get passed on to consumers — which isn't good for anyone.

If this merger goes through, it will put even more control into the hands of just a couple of rail companies. Less competition usually means higher prices and fewer choices, especially for businesses like ours that don't have the leverage of a large corporation.

We need a rail system that's competitive, reliable, and fair — one that supports businesses of all sizes, not just the biggest players. I hope the Surface Transportation Board takes that into account when reviewing this merger.

Thanks for taking the time to hear from a small business owner who's just trying to keep things running smoothly.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Adam Stewart". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Adam" and last name "Stewart" clearly distinguishable.

Adam Stewart

Founder

Cc: Parties of Record, Small Business Administration, and
United States Department of Justice