

October 22, 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 Marvin Harrell, and I'm the President and Founder of Harrell Custom Clothes, a small business based in Birmingham, Alabama. For years, we've been proud to serve clients across our state — from local professionals to community leaders — with custom clothing built on craftsmanship, reliability, and trust. Like so many small businesses, our success depends on a supply chain we can count on, including efficient and affordable rail service.

Recently, two of the nation's largest railroads — Union Pacific and Norfolk Southern — announced plans to merge. On the surface, it might sound like progress, but for small businesses like mine, I know from experience that these mergers often bring more challenges than benefits.

As an African American entrepreneur, I understand what it takes to build something from the ground up — often with fewer resources and steeper hills to climb. When large corporations merge and competition fades, it's the small, independent businesses — many of them minority-owned — that get squeezed the hardest. Delays, higher shipping costs, and unreliable service can hit us in ways big companies barely feel.

If this merger goes through, Union Pacific and Norfolk Southern would control most of the rail market, creating what's a near duopoly. Less competition always leads to higher costs, and those costs eventually make their way down to consumers and working families. That's not good for business, and it's not good for our communities.

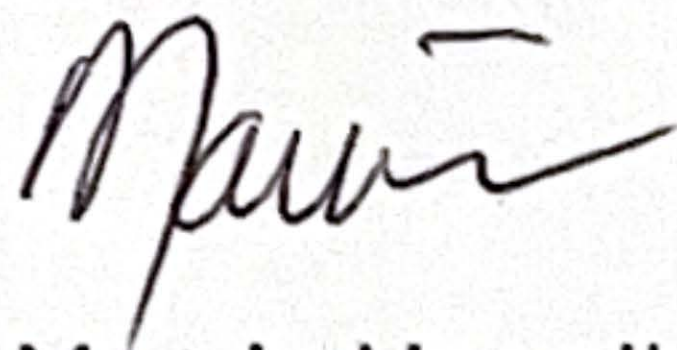
Healthy competition isn't about economics — it's about opportunity. It's about making sure every business, large or small, has a fair shot to grow and serve its customers. Alabama's

prosperity depends on a strong and competitive rail system that keeps goods moving, prices stable, and opportunities open to everyone.

I urge the Surface Transportation Board to carefully weigh the impact this merger could have on small and minority-owned businesses like mine and ensure any decision strengthens competition, reliability, and fairness.

Thank you for your time and for considering the voices of small business owners who keep our local economies strong.

Sincerely,

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

Marvin Harrell

Harrell Custom Clothes

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