

October 29, 2025

ENTERED
Office of Chief Counsel
November 13, 2025
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Public Record

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

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

Dear Office of Chief Counsel,

My name is Andy Hedge, and I'm a small business owner here in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. I recently heard that Union Pacific and Norfolk Southern — two of the biggest railroads in the country — are planning to merge. On paper, that might sound like progress, but for small businesses like mine, I worry it could make things harder, not easier.

We rely on dependable rail service to get the supplies we need and to ship our products out on time. When big companies merge, it doesn't always mean better service — in fact, it often means the opposite. I've seen what happens when these large consolidations go through: delays pile up, congestion gets worse, and small businesses like mine end up stuck waiting and paying more to keep things moving.

If this merger goes through, Union Pacific and Norfolk Southern would control most of the rail network. That kind of dominance leaves very little room for competition, and when competition drops, costs go up. Eventually, those higher costs trickle down to customers — and everyone feels it.

Strong competition is what keeps prices fair and service reliable. I just ask that the Surface Transportation Board take a close look at how this merger could impact small businesses, local economies, and the people who depend on affordable, efficient shipping. Any merger should have clear benefits for competition, safety, and service — not just for shareholders.

Thank you for your time and for looking out for folks like us who are just trying to run a business and keep our communities growing.

Sincerely,



Andy Hedge

Cc: Parties of Record
United States Department of Justice
United States Department of Agriculture