

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

310245

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,

As a resident of Ponchatoula, LA for 20+ years, I care deeply about protecting our community's access to affordable goods. Freight rail plays a significant role in Louisiana's economy especially in my job as construction worker where most of our supplies are shipped by rail. It is also essential for keeping store shelves stocked, creating jobs, and helping families get what they need at a fair price.

Union Pacific and Norfolk Southern, two of the nation's largest railroads, announced a potential merger which sparked some major concerns for me. If approved without appropriate protections for competition, such a merger would be risky. Often, mergers result in reduced competition in freight rail that drives higher costs, and history shows these expenses don't stop at the rail yard.

We need to protect consumers and prevent rail industry consolidation from leading to higher costs and weaker service. When Union Pacific and Norfolk Southern officially file, I hope that the Surface Transportation Board takes a closer look and makes sure the tenets of the merger and conditions imposed on the transaction meet the standards for enhancing competition and safety to stimulate a healthy economy.

As you evaluate this merger, please keep the interests of everyday Louisiana residents in mind, especially those in small towns. A competitive freight rail system is critical for the workers and families who need it. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joshua Mercer', with a stylized, cursive script.

Joshua Mercer

Cc: Parties of Record
Governor of Louisiana
Members of Congress of Louisiana