

ENTERED
Office of Chief Counsel
November 13, 2025
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Public Record



October 10, 2025

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

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

To Whom it May Concern:

Our names are Aaron and Betsy Ward, and we own a small coffee shop here in Greenville, Ohio. Like many family-run businesses, we serve our neighbors every morning with fresh coffee, baked goods, and a warm place to gather. What might seem simple—making sure we have beans, milk, cups, sugar, and all the other supplies—actually depends on a complicated supply chain that stretches across the country. Reliable and affordable rail service is a critical part of keeping that chain moving.

We recently learned of plans for Union Pacific and Norfolk Southern, two of the nation's largest railroads, to merge. For businesses like ours, that's not just a news headline—it's a real concern. We've seen what happens when rail service falters: deliveries are delayed, costs spike, and small businesses like ours are left scrambling to keep the doors open.

The truth is, less competition in rail service usually means slower shipments and higher prices. And in a town like Greenville, those extra costs don't stop at our counter. They ripple through to the farmers who supply us, the vendors who deliver, and the families who stop by for their morning coffee. At the end of the day, our customers—hardworking people already facing higher grocery and gas bills—would end up paying more.

Competition is what keeps prices fair and services dependable. Ohio's small businesses, workers, and communities rely on that balance. As you review this proposed merger, we urge you to consider its impact on small-town businesses like ours. Any deal must meet the highest standards for protecting competition, maintaining reliable service, and keeping costs manageable for the families we serve.

Sincerely,


Aaron and Betsy Ward
Owners, A&B Coffee Shop
Greenville, Ohio

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