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ENTERED
Office of Chief Counsel
December 3, 2025
Part of
Public Record

December 3, 2025

CSXT-31

VIA E-FILING

Chief of Case Administration
Office of Chief Counsel
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20423-0001

Re: STB Docket No. FD 36836, Norfolk Southern Corporation & Norfolk Southern Railway Company—Acquisition of Control—Norfolk & Portsmouth Belt Line Railroad Company

Dear Chief of Case Administration:

Enclosed please find letters in regard to the application filed by Norfolk Southern Corporation and Norfolk Southern Railway Company in the above-referenced proceeding from the following parties:

- Tyron Riddick, Suffolk City School Board Member – Suffolk Borough
- Bishop C. Vernie Russell Jr, Presiding Prelate, Faith In Action Ministries International; New Mt. Carmel Baptist Church, Senior Pastor – Norfolk, VA; Union Baptist Missionary Church, Senior Pastor – Suffolk, VA
- Clarence Ash III, Vice President of Operations, Crocker Funeral Home, Suffolk, VA
- Dr. Trevon Boone, Senior Pastor, Tabernacle Baptist Outreach Center; Superintendent, W.P. Wiggins Memorial District VA II
- Jeffrey Townsend, Co-Owner, Rennee's Restaurant and Lounge & Rennee's Event Center
- Phillip Hawkins Jr., Former President of Ingleside Civic League; Former Union Leader
- Rennee Townsend, Co-Owner, Phyllis Foster Driving School, Suffolk, VA

Chief of Case Administration
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Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Peter W. Denton

Peter W. Denton
Attorney for CSX Transportation, Inc.

Enclosures

Cynthia T. Brown
Chief of Administration
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20423

Re: STB Docket No. FD 36836 – Norfolk Southern’s Application to Control NPBL

Dear Ms. Brown,

I am writing in my personal capacity, though I believe it is important to share the perspective I’ve gained as a member of the Suffolk City School Board, founder of a youth empowerment nonprofit, and a former Suffolk Public Schools bus driver — who still drives buses for youth groups across our community whenever needed. Throughout my many roles in Suffolk, including serving as the former Suffolk NAACP Chapter President, pastor, nonprofit leader, and now an elected official, my focus has always been on ensuring fair and equal access for all residents.

It is with that commitment in mind that I write in support of CSX having fair access to the Norfolk & Portsmouth Belt Line Railroad. This access is essential to improving how our growing community manages infrastructure challenges.

Although I have personally had a respectful and productive working relationship with Norfolk Southern when raising community concerns, I understand that many residents have not had the same experience. Positive individual interactions do not erase the broader issues that continue to impact our community.

My years as a school bus driver gave me a deep understanding of roadway safety and traffic congestion. Every day, I witnessed the challenges bus drivers, students, and families face navigating increasing traffic and large truck volumes. As Suffolk rapidly expands with warehouses, industrial facilities, new neighborhoods, and additional roadways, these concerns will only intensify.

I also understand that granting CSX equal access to the rail line could result in additional train activity. However, I respect the fact that CSX has come to our community proactively, presenting their proposal openly and seeking meaningful input from residents and leaders. My hope is that, if CSX is granted access, they will continue this public-private engagement model, consistently involving elected officials, civic organizations, community leaders, and citizens as a whole in conversations that impact our neighborhoods.

Allowing CSX fair access to the Belt Line still offers a meaningful opportunity to reduce long-haul truck traffic, particularly in neighborhoods — often communities of color — where road improvements are not always prioritized. Moving more freight by rail can help ease congestion and make our roadways safer for everyone.

This moment also allows our region to build a more balanced, cooperative relationship with both CSX and Norfolk Southern. At a time when division and competition often overshadow collaboration, I believe decisions like this must be guided by fairness and equal access.

With that understanding, I support a balanced power-sharing agreement between CSX and Norfolk Southern — rather than allowing one company to hold complete control. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,



Mr. Tyrone Riddick
Suffolk City School Board Member - Suffolk Borough

Cynthia T. Brown
Chief of Administration
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20423

Re: STB Docket No. FD 36836 – Norfolk Southern's Application to Control NPBL

Dear Ms. Brown,

I have had the honor of serving the people of the Hampton Roads region for many years. As a pastor in (Norfolk and Suffolk), I see every day how the decisions of powerful institutions affect ordinary families. Whether it's the air we breathe, the roads we drive, or the jobs that sustain us, these choices shape the moral fabric of our communities.

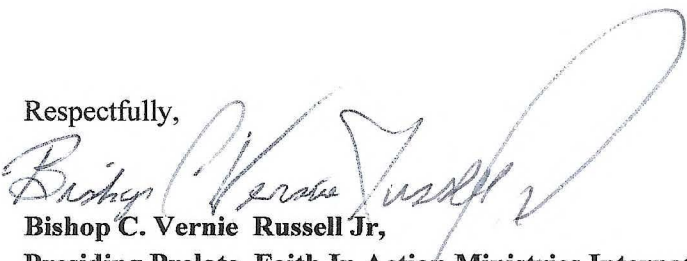
For years, Norfolk Southern has controlled the Norfolk & Portsmouth Belt Line in a way that limits competition and forces thousands of trucks through our neighborhoods. Those trucks bring noise, congestion, and pollution that fall hardest on working families. These challenges are especially evident in our communities of color, where the concentration of truck traffic and blocked crossings has become a daily burden.

Today I am writing out of concern about Norfolk Southern's proposal to take full control of the Norfolk & Portsmouth Belt Line Railroad. The question before the Surface Transportation Board is not simply about business. It is about fairness and stewardship. Under the current structure, too much freight has been forced onto trucks, creating heavy congestion on our roads and through our communities.

In closing, we are called to be good stewards of both our economy and our environment. Allowing fair rail access for both carriers would reduce truck traffic, protect creation, and strengthen the communities we share.

I care because I believe in standing for what is right: fairness, accountability, and opportunity for all. I hope that the Board will weigh not only the business implications of this decision, but its impact on the lives and well-being of people across Hampton Roads.

Respectfully,



Bishop C. Vernie Russell Jr.,
Presiding Prelate, Faith In Action Ministries International,
New Mt. Carmel Baptist Church, Senior Pastor – Norfolk, VA
Union Baptist Missionary Church, Senior Pastor – Suffolk, VA

Cynthia T. Brown
Chief of Administration
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20423

Re: STB Docket No. FD 36836 – Norfolk Southern's Application to Control NPBL

Dear Ms. Brown,

You may wonder why a funeral director would write in support of CSX having access to the Norfolk & Portsmouth Beltline. As the Vice President of Operations at Crocker Funeral Home, one of my greatest responsibilities is ensuring that families receive the highest level of dignity and care as they honor the memory of their loved ones. A critical part of that care is making sure funeral processions run smoothly and safely—at least the parts I can control.

What has often been outside my control is the increasing traffic in Suffolk and the frequent delays caused by railroad blockages during processions to churches and cemeteries. As one of the city's premier funeral homes, we regularly coordinate large processions with many vehicles following closely from one location to the next. My constant priority is the safety of every person in that procession, which often requires careful route planning to avoid heavy truck traffic and congested roads.

When I learned of Norfolk Southern's effort to take full control of the Belt Line—leaving CSX without direct access—the implications were immediately clear. Reduced rail access means more freight must move by truck, which would only add to the congestion our processions already struggle to navigate.

Additionally, under the current system, we frequently experience extended train delays during funeral services—sometimes waiting 15 to 30 minutes at crossings with dozens of grieving family members following behind. We have never had open communication with the current operators, leaving us to manage frustrated families while adapting to unpredictable traffic and rail conditions.

It is my hope that if CSX is granted appropriate access to the rail line, it will foster better community partnership—between CSX, Norfolk Southern, and local stakeholders—so that traffic management and safety are prioritized for all who share these roads, including funeral homes like ours.

Respectfully,



Clarence Ash III
Vice President of Operations
Crocker Funeral Home
Suffolk, VA

Cynthia T. Brown
Chief of Administration
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20423

Re: STB Docket No. FD 36836 – Norfolk Southern's Application to Control NPBL

Dear Ms. Brown,

Suffolk and its surrounding communities have been my home since birth. I was raised at New Mount Joy Food for Living Church on County Street and reared on Spruce Street—a neighborhood surrounded by two major industrial complexes, Planters Peanuts and Birdsong Peanuts, and positioned between two active railroad crossings. For decades, my home church and the predominantly African American community around it, in which I grew up, have endured constant truck traffic, long trains, damaged roads filled with potholes, and major congestion that often disrupts worship services and daily life.

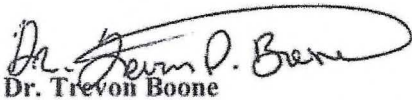
In my ministry journey, I became the Senior Pastor of Tabernacle Baptist Outreach Center on Nansemond Parkway. This road is one of the busiest corridors in our city, connecting Downtown and Northern Suffolk and now supporting major industrial developments, including Amazon. As a result, our community faces heavy long-haul truck traffic, repeated car accidents, and unpredictable, slow, and often stalled train operations. These issues affect not only my congregation but also the three schools, multiple neighborhoods, and several churches that rely on this corridor.

If Norfolk Southern is granted full control of the Norfolk and Portsmouth Belt Line, the unresolved issues our communities already face with their operations will likely continue. Even more concerning, restricting rail access to a single company will push more freight onto our roads, increasing truck traffic, worsening congestion, and accelerating road deterioration in neighborhoods like those I've served my entire life.

Many of my church members have long expressed frustration about the traffic, the large 18-wheeler trucks, and the inconsistent train activity that affects their ability to safely and reliably travel to church and throughout the community. This may be our best opportunity to address these challenges collectively.

As a pastor and as Superintendent of churches across this region, I believe it is my moral responsibility to speak up for our parishioners and to serve as a good steward of the communities and resources God has entrusted to us. For these reasons, I strongly support CSX's access and oppose Norfolk Southern's gaining full and exclusive control of this rail line.

Respectfully submitted,



Dr. Trevon Boone
Senior Pastor, Tabernacle Baptist Outreach Center
Superintendent, W.P. Wiggins Memorial District VA II

Cynthia T. Brown
Chief of Administration
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20423

Re: STB Docket No. FD 36836 – Norfolk Southern's Application to Control NPBL

Dear Ms. Brown,

As a co-owner of Rennee's Restaurant & Lounge and Rennee's Event Center- with my wife Rennee Townsend - in downtown Suffolk, I see firsthand how transportation decisions impact the daily lives of residents, visitors, and business owners.

Our businesses sit in the heart of the city, in an area that has hosted countless community gatherings, celebrations, and events. Because of our location, we deal with the ongoing challenges of heavy traffic and the steady flow of large trucks trying to navigate our small downtown streets.

Parking and congestion are already difficult when we are hosting events. These issues are made worse when long-haul trucks cut through downtown to reach warehouses, creating backups on streets that many of our customers regularly walk and drive through. In addition, our businesses sit near two railroad lines, and our patrons often experience train delays and other rail-related inconveniences when trying to visit us.

Though this case will not address every issue before us, granting CSX fair access to the Belt Line would provide business owners, residents, and visitors a more meaningful role in discussions about rail operations and their impact on our community. CSX has stated that with access to the line, we could see fewer long-haul trucks routed through our tight downtown corridors—roads that were never designed for that volume or size of vehicles.

This is not about choosing CSX over Norfolk Southern. It is about ensuring that everyone affected—especially those of us in the business community—has a seat at the table as Suffolk continues to grow and as our infrastructure continues to change. Fair rail access creates room for more conversation, more accountability, and better outcomes for the people who live, work, and invest in this city.

Thank you for considering this perspective from a local business owner committed to the well-being of our downtown community.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey Townsend

Co-Owner, Rennee's Restaurant and Lounge & Rennee's Event Center

Cynthia T. Brown
Chief of Administration
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20423

Re: STB Docket No. FD 36836 – Norfolk Southern's Application to Control NPBL

Dear Ms. Brown,

I am writing to the Surface Transportation Board as a strong supporter of meaningful community input in major decisions that affect our neighborhoods. My start in local politics began years ago because of concerns over rail lines running through my community and the lack of public engagement on those issues. Since then, as a civic league president, union president, and school administrator, I have consistently advocated for responsible infrastructure planning in the City of Norfolk.

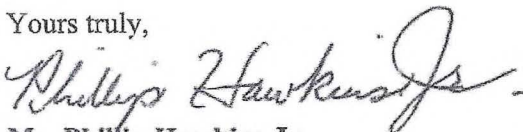
Norfolk is already one of the most densely populated cities in Virginia, with some of the worst traffic in the region. Our neighborhoods—many with narrow streets—are frequently overwhelmed by long-haul trucks. My understanding is that giving Norfolk Southern sole control would block CSX from accessing the rail line, forcing even more trucks onto our community streets. This would increase congestion, worsen environmental impacts, and create additional safety risks for school bus drivers, student drivers, and thousands of residents who rely on these roads daily.

Several areas in our city are already suffering because of the current railroad structure. Neighborhoods and corridors such as Cromwell Road and Ingleside Road; E. Princess Anne Road by Ashton Apartments near Bruce's Park and Olde Huntersville; Princess Anne Road near the ILA Building close to the Port of Virginia; E. Little Creek Road at Wards Corner; and Church Street near Church Street Station in Olde Huntersville have all experienced prolonged train stoppages, broken crossing arms, slow-moving trains, and major truck and car congestion. When we have raised concerns to the City of Norfolk, we have too often received no meaningful solutions.

Given these longstanding issues, it is difficult to understand why Norfolk Southern should be granted even more unchecked control over the railways that directly affect our neighborhoods. As a former union president, I believe firmly in fairness and balanced negotiation. Ensuring that CSX has access to the rail system is essential so that all parties operate on an even playing field—and so our community has the best chance at improved infrastructure, reduced congestion, and safer streets.

I respectfully urge the Board to maintain equitable rail access for all providers and to prioritize the well-being of the residents who live with the daily impacts of these decisions.

Yours truly,



Mr. Phillip Hawkins Jr.
Former President of Ingleside Civic League
Former Union Leader

Cynthia T. Brown
Chief of Administration
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20423

Re: STB Docket No. FD 36836 – Norfolk Southern's Application to Control NPBL

Dear Ms. Brown,

My name is Rennee Townsend, a longtime resident of the City of Suffolk, co – owner of Rennee's Restaurant and Lounge, Rennee's Event Center and the Phyllis Foster Driving School, which I run with my husband, Jefferey Townsend. Our mission has always been to prepare young people and adult drivers to safely navigate the ever-changing traffic patterns, long-haul truck routes, train crossings, and ongoing road projects throughout Suffolk and the surrounding communities.

One of the key lessons I teach my students is the importance of heightened awareness—especially when sharing the road with large trucks, which often travel on our narrower community roads. Over the years, my students and I have repeatedly faced the challenge of maneuvering around these trucks, and if Norfolk Southern is granted full and exclusive control of the Norfolk and Portsmouth Belt Line, these trucks will only increase. Without direct rail access for CSX to the Norfolk International Terminals, even more freight traffic will be pushed onto our local roads, leaving new and inexperienced drivers to navigate small, tight streets beside massive long-haul trucks. This creates an intimidating and unsafe environment for our youngest drivers.

I have also experienced firsthand the problems within the current rail system. During one of my lessons, my student and I were stopped at a railroad crossing where the guardrails were down, yet no train was coming. After calling the police and safely navigating around the malfunctioning gate, I tried to report the issue. City Council directed me to Norfolk Southern, but despite reaching out, I never received a response or solution. That experience left both me and my student unsure who truly oversees railroad concerns in Suffolk. I have never had a clear point of contact or any meaningful communication channel under Norfolk Southern's leadership.

This is why fair, reliable, and accessible rail infrastructure matters deeply to me—not only as a business owner, but as someone responsible for teaching the next generation of safe drivers. Allowing CSX continued access to the rail line ensures a more balanced system, reduces unnecessary truck traffic on our community roads, and provides another entity that has shown willingness to listen to and work with the community on rail-related concerns.

Suffolk will continue to grow, and large trucks will always play a role in our local economy. But we must do everything we can to mitigate traffic and railroad challenges by supporting the strongest, safest, and most responsive transportation solutions available. Ensuring a fair rail system is essential to keeping our roads as safe as possible for every driver—especially the young people I teach every day.

Sincerely,



Rennee Townsend
Co - Owner, Phyllis Foster Driving School
Suffolk, Virginia

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that I have caused this Letter in Docket No. FD 36836 to be served electronically or by first class mail, postage pre-paid, on the Secretary of Transportation, the Attorney General of the United States, Administrative Law Judge Jenifer Soulikias, Applicants' representative, William Mullins, and all parties of record in this proceeding.

/s/ Jensen Matsuda

Jensen Matsuda
Attorney for CSX Transportation, Inc.

December 3, 2025