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October 24, 2025

The Honorable Patrick J. Fuchs
Chairman
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street SW
Washington, D.C. 20423



**THE SENATE
STATE OF ARKANSAS**

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ENTERED
Office of Chief Counsel
November 13, 2025
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VICE CHAIR:
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RULES, RESOLUTIONS & MEMORIALS
LEGISLATIVE JOINT AUDITING



Dear Chairman Fuchs:

I am writing to express my support for the proposed merger between the Union Pacific and Norfolk Southern railroad companies. Rail infrastructure is vital to economic growth and serves as a backbone for regional development, employment, and sustained stability. This proposed merger will offer enhanced reliability in service, increased capacity, and more resilient supply chains.

South Arkansas is experiencing momentum in the timber, forestry, and manufacturing sectors. Weyerhaeuser has recently begun construction on a \$500 million Timber Strand facility, which is expected to create around 200 jobs, boost annual production by 10 million cubic feet, and utilize our southern yellow pine and regional fiber resources. To match these investments, we need improved infrastructure, including rail capacity and efficient freight flows. A better-connected rail system would more reliably facilitate the movement of timber, agricultural goods, and manufactured parts, reducing delays, lowering costs, and expanding markets. For residents of Union, Ouachita, Dallas, and Grant counties, this means greater stability, more opportunities, and increased incentives for outside investment.

With this merger, Union Pacific will continue to position southern Arkansas as a logistics and manufacturing hub, making our region more competitive for new industries and jobs. Additionally, this merger can help restore and strengthen commitments to good jobs, vibrant communities, and a stronger economic foundation. Thank you for your time and attention to this matter. I respectfully ask you to give the Union Pacific-Norfolk Southern merger every consideration. If I can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M Stone".

Matt Stone
Assistant Pro Tempore
District 2

MS:dc