



STATE OF ARKANSAS

House of Representatives

REPRESENTATIVE

Tracy Steele

Post Office Box 9267

North Little Rock, Arkansas 72119

501-580-9514 Cell

sensteele@yahoo.com

DISTRICT: 72

Counties:

Part Pulaski

COMMITTEES:

Public Transportation

Agriculture, Forestry and Economic

Development

Alternate,

Joint Committee on Public Retirement

and Social Security Programs

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Office of Chief Counsel

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November 6, 2025

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

Dear Chairman Fuchs:

From large-scale agriculture in the southeast to high-tech commerce in the northwest, Arkansas relies on robust transportation systems to connect our economy to markets nationwide. During my time in public service, I have witnessed how infrastructure choices impact Arkansans' lives—from putting food on the table to scaling businesses beyond brick and mortar. Reliable rail services are fundamental to this work, and the Union Pacific and Norfolk Southern merger presents a chance to enhance and reinforce them, connecting the system from coast to coast.

By combining resources, this deal will modernize rail operations, alleviate congestion, and reduce costs for shippers, unlocking nearly \$3 billion in efficiencies. For Arkansas, this translates to improved access to both national and international markets for energy producers, manufacturers, and farmers—the bread and butter of the Arkansas economy—all while opening the door to new opportunities for private investment, offering more stability for job creators, and encouraging long-term growth in our communities.

This merger will enable Arkansans to reap benefits through reduced costs that can be poured right back into our businesses with the necessary tools for growth and expansion, which will contribute to the sustained strength of our economy. Having collaborated with Arkansas business leaders, policymakers, and community stakeholders throughout my career, I recognize the kinds of deals that make sense, and an enhanced rail network not only transcends mere transportation, but it is fundamentally linked to economic competitiveness.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge your support for this merger and the economic promise it holds for the people of Arkansas.

Sincerely,

Tracy Steele

State Representative

District 72