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STATE OF ARKANSAS

House of Representatives

REPRESENTATIVE

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DISTRICT: 25

Counties:
Part Crawford
Part Franklin
Part Washington

COMMITTEES:

Public Transportation
Agriculture, Forestry and Economic
Development
Alternate,
Joint Committee on Energy
Joint Performance Review

February 27, 2026

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

Dear Chairman Fuchs:

In my district, transportation is crucial for our small businesses to compete effectively. We are situated at the crossroads of major logistics routes in Washington County and the wider Northwest Arkansas region. The ongoing development of I-49 has enhanced our status as a key freight corridor, leading to expansion for businesses along that route, which have confidence in the infrastructure. As future connectivity with I-69 develops across the region, we anticipate an increase in freight volume, making it essential to plan for this growth now.

However, highways cannot handle this growth alone. Rail is vital to our community's success, which is why I support the proposed merger between Union Pacific and Norfolk Southern. Whether it involves a large manufacturer or a small business passed down through generations, our economy relies on reliable rail service to transport materials in and finished goods out to the market.

Union Pacific has already been a crucial partner across Northwest Arkansas. A stronger, more integrated rail network could increase capacity, enhance coordination across regions, and provide the operational stability our employers depend on. Our agricultural producers rely on rail to access national and international markets. When rail service is dependable, businesses operate smoothly; but when it is unreliable, delays can disrupt the entire supply chain.

For a district focused on logistics, manufacturing, and agriculture, rail is not just a secondary form of infrastructure—it is essential. If this merger leads to improved service, long-term investment, and a rail system that evolves alongside I-49 and the future development of I-69, it will directly benefit the people and businesses in my community, as well as similar communities across the country.

Sincerely,

Chad Puryear
State Representative
District 25

CP/jnm