

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
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Member
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Michelle Shultz
Member
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
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To Chairman Fuchs and members of the Surface Transportation Board,

On behalf of the residents and communities in the Texas 29th Congressional district, I write with concerns about Union Pacific's proposed merger with Norfolk Southern. Our community lives alongside the Union Pacific main lines that run through dense, working-class, predominantly Latino neighborhoods in Houston's East End and surrounding areas. Union Pacific's withholding of blocked crossing data would have direct consequences for public safety, mobility, and the quality of life of the residents I serve. Therefore, I urge the Surface Transportation Board not to consider the merger application as complete until UP submits comprehensive blocked crossing impact data.

Union Pacific operates active main lines through some of the most densely populated neighborhoods in the City of Houston. Residents and local agencies have documented persistent and serious impacts, including:

- Frequent and prolonged blocked at-grade crossings, often lasting an hour or more, that delay emergency response by fire, Emergency Medical Services (EMS), and police.
- Restricted access to schools, hospitals, workplaces, and houses of worship for residents on foot and in vehicles.
- Public safety incidents at and near rail crossings, including pedestrian and vehicle conflicts.

These impacts are well-documented at the local level. The proposed transaction's projected freight growth threatens to amplify each of these impacts.

In their May 12th, 2026 reply on completeness (UP-51/NS-49, Section XI), UP asserts that blocked crossings are appropriately addressed only through the Board's environmental review process under 49 C.F.R. § 1180.8(a)(2). I respectfully disagree with treating an issue of this magnitude as a procedural matter to be deferred to a separate track.

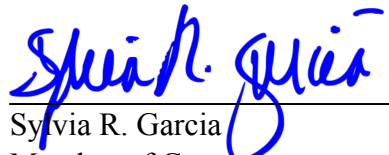
Environmental review on its own does not produce enforceable operating conditions on the merged railroad. A meaningful response requires conditions imposed at the time of merger approval, with measurable performance standards, public reporting requirements, and a clear enforcement mechanism.

Without those, communities along the line and the local governments accountable to them have no alternative solution to address blocked crossings.

On behalf of my district and several communities at risk, I request that you require the applicants to submit a comprehensive blocked crossing impact data. The proposed merger would give Union Pacific control of freight rail operations through neighborhoods in our jurisdiction that already bear significant cumulative burdens. Any approval, without considering these impacts and risks, would place an even greater burden on vulnerable communities.

I respectfully urge the Board to ensure that the public interest standard is applied with the seriousness this community deserves. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Sylvia R. Garcia
Member of Congress