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VIA ELECTRONIC FILING

Chairman Patrick Fuchs
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20423-0001

Re: Docket No. FD 36873, Union Pacific Corp., et al. - Control - Norfolk Southern Corp., et al. - Resident Comments on the Significance of Blocked Rail Crossings

To Chairman Fuchs and members of the Surface Transportation Board:

I am a resident of Houston, Texas, living in Eastwood near Union Pacific rail lines that run through my community. I am writing to ask the Board to take blocked rail crossings seriously as it evaluates the proposed merger between Union Pacific and Norfolk Southern.

My experience

I have been a homeowner in the Eastwood neighborhood for over a decade. Like many residents, I chose to make this area my home because of its walkability and easy commute to downtown employment using Houston's public transit system. Much to my surprise, I quickly discovered that accessing the light rail, just a short walk from my home, would become a gamble and at times completely impossible due to Union Pacific trains parking for hours blocking nine crossings spanning nearly a mile and a half. This effectively cuts residents off from a vital transportation link in an area where more than ten percent of households do not own a personal vehicle.

My home is adjacent to Lantrip Elementary School, the oldest operating elementary school in Houston, where the majority of students live on the opposite side of the Galveston Subdivision where these trains frequently park. I have personally witnessed small children climbing under and over stopped trains to get to school, parents maneuvering strollers through railcars, and commuters trying to get home from work while facing a wall of train cars stretching more than a mile, with no way of knowing if or when the train will move or which direction they should walk to determine whether it is even possible to get around it.

Based on my personal experiences with Union Pacific, I fear that this merger, which is expected to significantly increase the number of trains running through my neighborhood, will have a

serious negative impact on residents' quality of life as blocked rail crossings continue to increase with no planned solutions in place.

Why this matters in our community

Blocked crossings pose public safety risks to our community. They delay emergency response times for fire, EMS, and police. They cut off access to schools, medical facilities, and workplaces. They affect residents' ability to move through their own neighborhood on foot or by car, including elderly neighbors and parents with small children.

The East End and surrounding Houston neighborhoods already bear a disproportionate share of freight rail impacts. We have lived alongside these tracks for generations. The proposed merger is projected to grow freight volumes through our community, and growth in train counts and train length translates directly into more frequent and longer blockages at the at-grade crossings we depend on every day.

The Applicant's position should not control the Board's review

In their May 12, 2026, reply on completeness (UP-51/NS-49, Section XI), Applicants take the position 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 this as a procedural punt to a separate, slower track.

Environmental review on its own does not produce enforceable operating conditions on the merged railroad. A meaningful response to blocked crossings requires conditions imposed at the time of merger approval, with measurable reporting requirements and a real enforcement mechanism. Without those, communities along the line have no practical recourse when blockages happen.

The Board has clear authority under 49 U.S.C. § 10101 and 49 U.S.C. § 11324(c) to impose conditions necessary to protect the public interest, including conditions addressing community impacts of a proposed control transaction. Approving this merger without addressing blocked crossings in densely populated communities would consolidate freight rail control through our neighborhood without corresponding accountability.

Conditions I respectfully request

I respectfully ask that the Board:

1. Treat blocked crossings as a substantive issue in this proceeding, in addition to the environmental review process.
2. Require Applicants to disclose, by neighborhood and by crossing, projected post-merger frequency, duration, and timing of blockages at at-grade crossings in densely populated communities along their lines, including the East End of Houston.
3. Condition any approval of the proposed transaction on enforceable measures to reduce blocked crossings, including:
 - a. A requirement that Applicants share real-time train movement information with local emergency services and 911 dispatchers.

- b. Public quarterly reporting on blockage frequency and duration at identified high-impact crossings.
- c. A dedicated regional point of contact and complaint process for affected residents and local governments.
- d. d. Investment in grade separation, signaling improvements, or other mitigation at crossings the Board identifies as posing the greatest public safety risk.

Closing

Thank you for your consideration. I am happy to provide additional information about my experience or the impacts on my neighborhood if it would assist the Board's review.

Respectfully submitted,
Nathan A Wood
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cc: Parties of Record

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that on this 19th day of May, 2026, the foregoing document was served to all parties of record to this proceeding.

/s/ Nathan Wood
Nathan Wood