

CENTRE COUNTY
Board of Commissioners

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Office of Chief Counsel
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JOHN FRANEK JR.

MARK HIGGINS, *Chair*
AMBER CONCEPCION
STEVEN G. DERSHEM

SOLICITOR
ELIZABETH A. DUPUIS

BOC@centrecountypa.gov

July 9, 2026

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



RE: Support for Union Pacific and Norfolk Southern Merger

Dear Chairman Fuchs,

As a Centre County Commissioner from Pennsylvania, I am writing to express my support for the proposed merger between Norfolk Southern (NS) and Union Pacific (UP).

Centre County is home to manufacturers, farmers, and consumers who depend on safe reliable rail. By establishing the nation's first seamless coast-to-coast rail network, this merger will enhance the efficiency and affordability of freight rail, encouraging more businesses to choose this safer and more sustainable mode of transportation. The resulting increase in freight traffic through our intermodal facilities will stimulate job growth in the rail sector and strengthen our region.

While Norfolk Southern doesn't operation the mainlines in Centre County, they do manage the connecting railways that give our small businesses and our consumers access to their 22 state eastern footprint. This will increase following the merger as Union Pacific's footprint expands to the other states.

Beyond economic opportunities, the merger promises meaningful daily benefits for our residents. Increased rail efficiency will reduce the number of long-haul trucks on our highways and bridges – vehicles that place significant strain on shared infrastructure and pose safety risks to our communities.

I strongly support this merger and the economic opportunities it represents for our community. I respectfully urge the Surface Transportation Board will approve it without delay.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve Dershem". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Steve" and last name "Dershem" clearly distinguishable.

Steve Dershem
Centre County Commissioner

Cc: Member Schultz
Member Hedlund