



Natural Resources Conservation Service

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Natural Resources Conservation Service New Mexico State Office

100 Sun Avenue NE, Suite 602

Albuquerque, New Mexico 87109

(505) 761-4400

VIA ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION

August 25, 2026

Surface Transportation Board

395 E Street SW

Washington, DC 20423

RE: Docket No. FD 36873, Preliminary Consultation

Dear Sir or Madam:

Thank you for providing the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) with the opportunity to review potential environmental impacts of the merger of Union Pacific and Norfolk Southern Railway and the proposed changes in operation.

The Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA) authorizes the NRCS to provide reviews of proposed projects that have the potential to irreversibly convert farmlands to non-farmland or irreversibly convert hydric areas to non-hydric uses as the result of programs funded by the federal government. In review of the information provided on the project, it is determined that the entire project is non-farmland with soils that are not rated as Prime or Important Farmlands. The FPPA rules define farmland conversion to be "to the extent that it irreversibly converts farmland to other purposes." This project is not expected to have that effect. With this acknowledged, the proposed project will not cause Prime or Important Farmlands or hydric soils to be converted to non-agricultural or non-hydric uses and is not subject to the FPPA.

Please feel free to contact Jason Mondragon-Martin at (505) 761-4445 or at Jason.martin2@usda.gov if you have further questions or comments regarding this review.

Respectfully,

Juan Xavier Montoya Digitally signed by Juan Xavier Montoya
Date: 2026.08.25 07:49:35 -06'00'

J. XAVIER MONTOYA

State Conservationist

cc: Jason Mondragon-Martin, *State Soil Scientist*, USDA-NRCS, Albuquerque, NM

Natural Resources Conservation Service

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