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Office of Chief Counsel
November 6, 2026
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Public Record

Chief of Case Administration
Office of Chief Counsel
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20423-0001

November 6, 2026

Re: Docket No. AB-290 (Sub-No. 425X) Norfolk Southern Railway Company – Abandonment Exemption – in Rockingham, Shenandoah, and Warren Counties, Virginia

To the Chief of Case Administration:

I served as Special Assistant to U.S. Transportation Secretary John A. Volpe in the first Nixon administration when America's rail passenger service was overhauled and consolidated, resulting in the curtailment of many lines. When Congress and the administration created Amtrak (originally called Railpax), it was stipulated that the right of way for any passenger rail line temporarily deactivated was to be preserved as a "transportation corridor" for possible future movement of people and goods. The concept of multi-modalism was a by-word of Secretary Volpe, the Nixon administration and Congress. Preserving the Norfolk Southern B line in the Shenandoah Valley would serve that purpose by both facilitating the transfer of freight from the highways to available and more appropriate rail lines and enhancing the prospect of the return of rail passenger service along the I-81 corridor.

The volume of heavy truck traffic along Interstate 81 illustrates both the problem in Virginia and much of the nation, as well as the likely solution. Trucks, which have grown far larger and more dangerous to surrounding automobile traffic in recent decades, now dominate many of America's highways even though, as is true with I-81, there is a viable rail alternative available. Transferring much of the freight now carried on the interstate highway to the still-extant rail line would save thousands of gallons of fuel; reduce costs to shippers, industry and agriculture; minimize environmental pollution; and avoid the highway safety dangers associated with the high volume of big truck traffic.

The revival of rail freight service and the inauguration of rail tourism will preserve this irreplaceable transportation asset in the Shenandoah Valley and enable a Virginia renaissance of commuter and rail passenger service as a national model.

I support the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation and the Manassas Gap Railroad project to revive rail service in the Shenandoah Valley. With reference to Docket No. AB 290, I urge the

board to stay focused on its mission of freight rail service and allow a full airing of the freight rail option by putting the abandonment notice and the request for exclusive trail use in abeyance.

I have served this letter on all parties of record

Sincerely,

Joseph A. Bosco

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