Senator Frank W Nolen, PE
680 Patterson Mill Rd
Grottoes, Virginia 24441

540 294 0310 mobile
540 363 5642 landline
fnolen@newhopetel.net
www.grazelenfarm.com

Senate of Virginia
24th District
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Office of Chief Counsel
November 6, 2026
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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

Dear Chief of Case Administration:

About thirty years ago the Norfolk Southern Railroad filed to abandon a portion of the Chesapeake and Western Railroad from Harrisonburg south to Staunton, Virginia.

There were few customers because of poor tracks and service. However, several businesses and individuals realized the importance of this railway in Augusta and Rockingham counties. Therefore, a group called Greater Shenandoah Valley Development Co (GSDC) was formed to purchase the tracks and right of way.

When the offer to purchase was made to NS, they filed with the ICC to withdraw the abandonment which the ICC denied. However, NS was able to withdraw the trackage from Harrisonburg to Pleasant Valley. The GSDC then pursued buying the remaining trackage of about 19 miles. After a lot of wrangling and negotiating, GSDC was able to purchase the short line and start operating as Shenandoah Valley Railroad.

Today SVRR carries about 2000 carloads of freight per year. In conjunction with the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation, the ownership has invested funds in upgrading the rail bridges and roadbed. SVRR hauls freight most every business day. In the last decade, the carloads have increased 2-fold.

I believe the Norfolk Southern B-Line from Broadway to Riverton Junction can achieve the same success. I support the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation and the Manassas Gap Railroad project to revive rail service in the Shenandoah Valley. 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 trail use in abeyance.

Sincerely,

Frank W Nolen PE