REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

JEFFERSON, ORLEANS, PLAQUEMINES, ST. BERNARD, ST. CHARLES, ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST, ST. TAMMANY AND TANGIPAHOA PARISHES

313175

ENTERED
Office of Chief Counsel
November 18, 2026
Part of
Public Record

November 18, 2026

Ms. Cynthia Brown
Chief of Case Administration
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street SW
Washington DC, 20423-001

Re: Union Pacific Corporation and Union Pacific Railroad Company- Control- Norfolk Southern Corporation and Norfolk Southern Railway Company, Docket no. FD 36873

Dear Ms. Brown:

The Regional Planning Commission is the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the New Orleans urban area pursuant to 23 USC 134. The New Orleans rail gateway is one of the most important freight corridors in the United States. Its continued competitiveness is essential to the economic vitality of the New Orleans region and the entire gulf region. Our communities rely on the six Class 1 railroads to access the ports along the Lower Mississippi River and adjacent industries that are crucial to the economy- of not only our region, but that of the gulf coast and of the rest of the country.

The proposed UP-NS consolidation would place several critical gateway assets, including the NS Back Belt, Chalmette Branch, and UP's Avondale Yard under the control of a single Class 1 railroad. Without safeguards, this consolidation could limit competitive access for shippers, reduce interchange fluidity, and undermine the economic benefits associated with the Louisiana International Terminal (LIT), a generational investment in our region's- and the nation's- future. Simply put, RPC is concerned about preserving meaningful competition in the gateway.

Consistent with Title 23 and Title 49 of the U.S. Code, MPOs such as ours must weigh several factors in their planning processes, including economic vitality, the safety and security of the transportation system, and improved access and mobility for people and freight. The increase in rail traffic expected from the merger, and the resulting conflicts at at-grade crossings with vehicular traffic, could significantly affect local roadway networks and other modes in our region's surface transportation system.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey W. Roesel AICP
Executive Director
Regional Planning Commission

Cc: Parties of Record

REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
Telephone (504) 483-8500 Fax (504) 483-8526
Email: rpc@norpc.org; Web Site: http://www.norpc.org
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November 18, 2026

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that on this 18th day of November 2026, a true and correct copy of the foregoing submission was served upon all Parties of Record in Docket No. FD 36873.

Jeffrey W. Roesel
Executive Director
Regional Planning Commission

CC: Parties of Record

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Dear Ms. Brown:

The Regional Planning Commission is the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the New Orleans urban area in accordance with 23 USC 134. Pursuant to that responsibility, we are requesting that the Surface Transportation Board (STB) hold a public meeting in the New Orleans region as part of the environmental review of the proposed Union Pacific acquisition of the Norfolk- Southern, Docket No, FD 36873.

Our request comes as the New Orleans rail gateway is one of the most important freight corridors in the United States. Its continued competitiveness is essential to the economic vitality of the New Orleans region, the gulf coast, and arguably, the nation. Our communities rely on the six Class 1 railroads to access the port complexes along the lower Mississippi River and adjacent industries that are vital to the commerce of the United States.

Title 23 and Title 49 of the US Code direct MPO's such as ours to consider several factors in their respective planning processes and policies. These include economic vitality; safety and security of the transportation system; and improving access and mobility for people and freight, among others. A merger of these carriers may be impactful to transportation planning and policies promulgated by the Commission.

Again, we respectfully request that the STB consider the New Orleans Gateway be considered as a venue for its public meetings so that local and regional business interests and other stakeholders may participate directly in the public participation process.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Jeffrey W. Roesel AICP
Executive Director
Regional Planning Commission

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Consistent with Title 23 and Title 49 of the U.S. Code, MPOs such as ours must weigh several factors in their planning processes, including economic vitality, the safety and security of the transportation system, and improved access and mobility for people and freight. The increase in rail traffic expected from the merger, and the resulting conflicts at at-grade crossings with vehicular traffic, could significantly affect local roadway networks and other modes in our region's surface transportation system.

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