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Ms. Cynthia T. Brown
Chief, Section of Administration
Office of Proceedings
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20423

EP 705

Dear Ms. Brown

I'm writing to urge the Surface Transportation Board to make a finding that there is a profound lack of rail-to-rail competition in the national rail system. The STB should change its policies to enable increased rail-to-rail competition.

Currently, anti-competitive practices within the railroad industry have driven costs up on my monthly electric bill. That's not right and the STB can help fix it. I grew up right next to the BNSF tracks and have seen the color of the locomotives change over the years as BNSF has merged over and over. Today, they are a behemoth near monopoly operating in 28 states. Where I am at in Cambridge, NE there is an ethanol plant and all the ethanol is shipped out by rail. There is no alternative so the plant must pay whatever BNSF wants to charge. Coal is where they make most of their money, but they make money at in everything they do. For example, they were given a very large tract of land by the government to cross Nebraska and help settle the west. Now, if you want to cross their rail line it just about takes an act of Congress.

Rural-based business and agriculture rely on affordable electricity. Increased rail competition will help maintain affordable electric rates in rural America and will improve economic opportunities for rural communities like mine.

Increased rail competition will also increase the revenues of American agriculture by improving the ability of producers and manufacturers to ship their products affordably, thus improving exports, creating jobs and improving the standard of living in rural communities.

The Surface Transportation Board has an opportunity to make a positive difference and help improve our economy. The comments that the STB has received include numerous examples of the lack of adequate competition in the railroad industry. I hope the STB will find that there is inadequate competition in the railroad industry and will then revise their policies to enhance rail-to-rail competition in order to help preserve affordable electricity and good jobs throughout America.

Thank you,
James Dietz
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