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November 15, 2016

EP 711 (Sub No. 1)

Mr. Daniel Elliott, Chairman
U.S. Surface Transportation Board
395 E. Street SW
Washington D.C. 20423

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ENTERED
Office of Proceedings
November 23, 2016
Part of
Public Record

Mrs. Deb Miller, Vice Chairman
U.S. Surface Transportation Board
395 E. Street SW
Washington D.C. 20423

Mrs. Ann Begeman, Board Member
U.S. Surface Transportation Board
395 E. Street SW
Washington D.C. 20423

Subject: Docket Ex Parte No. 711

Dear Chairman Elliott, Vice Chairman Miller, and Member Bergman

I represent Michigan's 26th State Senate District in Southwest Michigan and I appreciate the opportunity to share my thoughts on the U.S. Surface Transportation Board's (STB) proposed regulations.

The STB announced a plan to impose a number of new regulatory initiatives that would diminish the strength of the rail industry. The STB's proposed regulations would undermine the current regulatory framework, established in 1980, which helped bring freight railroads back to financial health and stability following years of detrimental federal over-regulation.

One of the STB's proposed regulations would require railroads to provide their competitors with access to their rail lines. This would inevitably slow down the overall movement of goods across the nation and inhibit the efficiency of the national rail system. Others would re-regulate certain commodities and give favorable treatment to shippers based on what they ship. These proposals would negatively affect consumers, manufacturers, and businesses in my district and across the country who depend on the rail system to send and receive goods.

In order to promote the well-being of our economy, it is imperative that businesses have access to swift, predictable, and affordable shipping options to satisfy their customers' requirements. By requiring railroads to comply with these burdensome regulations, STB risks constricting business activity and raising costs. The disruptive effects the proposed regulations would have would impact not only businesses, but the local communities surrounding them.

I urge the board to carefully consider the implications of STB's proposed regulations. Consumers could experience negative consequences as a result of over-regulation of rail lines. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tonya Schuitmaker". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Tonya" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Schuitmaker".

Tonya Schuitmaker
State Senator
26th District

TS:ds