

August 22, 2017

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Ann D. Begeman
Acting Chairman
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20423

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Docket Number: EP_670_2

Case Title: Notice of Rail Energy Transportation Advisory Committee Vacancy

Dear Acting Chairman Begeman:

On behalf of the National Corn Growers Association (NCGA), which represents more than 40,000 dues-paying corn farmers nationwide and the interests of more than 300,000 growers who contribute through corn checkoff programs in their states, it is my pleasure to nominate Doug Noem for membership on the Rail Energy Transportation Advisory Committee (RETAC).

NGCA is a federation of state organizations, corn board, councils and commissions that develop and implement policies and programs on a state and national level to create and increase opportunities for corn growers. NCGA is a grower-led trade association headquartered in St. Louis, Missouri, with a second office in Washington, D.C.

Doug and his wife Kathy and their two children operate a diversified crop and livestock farm near Bryant, South Dakota. He serves on NCGA's Risk Management Action Team and joined the South Dakota Growers Association board of directors in 2012. He is currently Vice President of South Dakota Corn Growers and has served on NCGA corn vision 2020 committee.

Doug knows firsthand that agricultural products, particularly biofuels, represent a tremendous growth opportunity, both home and abroad. . However, he is also acutely aware that transportation constraints can threaten the growth of the renewable fuels industry.

In response to extraordinary demand, 200 operating ethanol bio refineries in 28 states produced a record 15.25 billion gallons of high-octane renewable fuel in 2016, along with roughly 42 million metric tons of high-protein animal feed. Due to record low oil prices, gasoline consumption soared, leading to unparalleled ethanol use in the nation's gasoline supply. In addition, growth in the industry increased as hundreds of retail stations installed infrastructure and began offering higher blends of ethanol, such as E15 and E85. In addition, the industry is expanding to meet a growing global demand for ethanol. U.S. ethanol exports rose to more than 1 billion gallons in 2016, the second-highest annual total on record. It is imperative that rail infrastructure is able to accommodate growing volumes and provide timely access for all shippers, including ethanol.

NCGA appreciates the Surface Transportation Board's focus on emerging issues regarding rail transportation of energy resources, includes biofuels, and we fully support the work of the RETAC board. Doug would be an excellent resource on RETAC due to his perspective of a biofuels feedstock producers as well as an advocate for improved rail performance, capacity and infrastructure development.

Corn gets from farm to fuel via this nation's railways. We must have a reliable infrastructure in place to move our products nationwide. Without adequate transportation, ethanol growth and alternative fuel expansion will be negatively affected. It is in our best interest to be actively engaged on these important issues and appreciate your consideration of Doug Noem as a candidate to RETAC. Should you need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact Brooke Appleton in our Washington, DC office 202-628-7001.

Sincerely, 

Wesley Spurlock
President

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