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COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE,
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July 22, 2019

The Honorable Ann D. Begeman
Chairman
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street Southwest
Washington, DC 20423

The Honorable Martin J. Oberman
Board Member
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street Southwest
Washington, DC 20423

The Honorable Patrick J. Fuchs
Vice Chairman
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street Southwest
Washington, DC 20423

Dear Chairman Begeman, Vice Chairman Fuchs, and Commissioner Oberman:

I am writing regarding the Surface Transportation Board's rulemaking in *Review of Commodity, Boxcar, and TOFC/COFC Exemptions*, Docket No. EP 704 (Sub-No. 1), which addresses potential revocation of certain existing class exemptions under 49 C.F.R. Part 1039. Thank you for your work on this important issue and opening the docket for ex parte communications. I know you have spent considerable time meeting with stakeholders on this matter.

As the Board continues its work in Docket No. EP 704 (Sub-No. 1), I urge you to consider revocation of certain class exemptions, including as it relates to paper and forest products. The Surface Transportation Board is the sole economic regulatory agency responsible for railroad rate and service disputes. Consequently, shippers subject to class exemptions are unable to bring rate and other cases before the Board and have no forum for resolving such rail disputes. I encourage you to consider ways to provide additional recourse to these shippers.

Thank you for your focus on this important issue and consideration of this request. Your continued partnership in promoting a competitive, efficient, and reliable national rail system is truly appreciated.

Sincerely,



Roger F. Wicker
Chairman