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Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

September 1, 2017

TODD ROKITA  
4TH DISTRICT, INDIANA

COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET  
VICE-CHAIRMAN

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION  
AND THE WORKFORCE

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION  
AND INFRASTRUCTURE

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Office of Proceedings  
September 8, 2017  
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Acting Chairman Ann D. Begeman  
Surface Transportation Board  
395 E Street, SW  
Washington D.C. 20423

Dear Acting Director Begeman:

I write this letter to inform you of how the recent CSX "Precision Scheduled Railroading" operating plan changes have negatively affected the residents of my district, notably with persistent service disruptions and increased risks to public safety. While I appreciate the efforts of the Surface Transportation Board (STB) to keep the committees informed, I believe further action is required in order to address the well-documented problems this recent change has caused in Indiana. I also want to note that CSX has long been a good neighbor, especially to many towns and businesses in Indiana. They are an integral part of the state's economy, and I hope that a solution can be found. I have worked diligently with them and impacted stakeholders to find solutions, but such an answer has so far proved elusive.

Ahead of the September 12<sup>th</sup> listening session between the STB and CSX, I want to use this opportunity to document the fact that contrary to CSX's public statements that the train backlog is being cleared and concerns are being resolved quickly. Many people, towns and industries across the 4th District and state remain negatively impacted with no clear solution or strategy in sight.

For example according to a local township official who oversees EMT and fire protection services in the immediate area affected, a 10,726 foot train blocked two major intersections in the town of Clermont at the same time (Crossing ID Road #535642T Raceway Road and #535641L Tansel Road) recently. This blockage closed these intersections for approximately nine hours, caused congestion and posed a significant emergency and public safety risk. Equally appalling is on Sunday August 20<sup>th</sup> a train was stopped on the town intersection for nearly 24 hours. We have apprised CSX of these delays and their impact on the local communities.

Additionally, rail dependent businesses like Tate and Lyle, which have a plant in the heart of the district, are being forced to find alternative transportation modes for their products. This means they use more trucks. On average it takes five trucks to replace one rail car, resulting in higher expenses, more truck traffic, road congestion and additional safety risks.

Furthermore, the Indiana agriculture industry has and will continue to take a hit from CSX's inability to provide sound service. Notably, 40% of Indiana grain facilities are serviced

by CSX. Since June, some soybean plants have decreased their intake by 20,000 bushels of soybeans a day. As the harvest season approaches, more plants may have to take similar actions.

For example, some plants will have to add to surplus, adding to the already large carryover surplus left from last year's crop. Each bushel that these plants do not process and transport is added back to surplus. This ultimately pushes down prices paid to farmers. These plants are designed to always run near full capacity and now there is no opportunity to make up for the lost production due to poor train service.

I look forward to reviewing the details of the upcoming listening session and ask this letter be included in the record. Additionally, an action plan with details and clear deadlines that I can share with my constituents and community leaders would be appreciated. I want to reiterate, CSX has been a good neighbor, however, recent changes need to be examined.

Finally, I am eager to work with you and identify ways to resolve the current situation and identify practices that ensure future systemic backlogs do not occur again and negatively impact the lives of so many. Thank you and if you have any questions please call me at my office at (202) 225-5037.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Todd Rokita". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "T" and "R".

Todd Rokita

TR/mc