

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

THOMAS J. DONOHUE
PRESIDENT AND
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

October 23, 2019

1615 H STREET, N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20062-2000

The Honorable Ann D. Begeman
Chairman
U.S. Surface Transportation Board
395 E St., SW
Washington, D.C. 20423

The Honorable Martin J. Oberman
Member
U.S. Surface Transportation Board
395 E St., SW 248696
Washington, D.C. 20423

The Honorable Patrick J. Fuchs
Vice Chairman
U.S. Surface Transportation Board
395 E St., SW
Washington, D.C. 20423

ENTERED
Office of Proceedings
October 31, 2019
Part of
Public Record
FD_36025

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

The United States Chamber of Commerce ("Chamber") respectfully requests the Board grant a streamlined exemption and take jurisdiction over the Texas Central Railways ("TCR") project.

At a time when federal infrastructure revenues cannot meet the nation's transportation needs, it is critical that the government incentivize and leverage private-sector and foreign direct investment to help meet our nation's mobility needs. The TCR project, which is funded through private and foreign direct investment, is an important demonstration of non-taxpayer funded infrastructure.

The Chamber was pleased to see the Rule of Particular Applicability granted in August, as it demonstrated the forward progress of this project as well as the government's commitment to thorough reviews. But to realize the potential for this and other similar projects, permitting approvals and funding agreements need to be expedited, as these are important signals to the private sector that these types of projects can move from concept to construction in a timely manner. For the TCR project, once permitting for the project is approved then significant additional private investment will follow.

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By granting the pro forma exemption and asserting rightful jurisdiction of this project, the Board will demonstrate its continued leadership in promoting innovative transportation infrastructure rail projects that help grow the American economy, create jobs, and improve lives with negligible risk or costs to taxpayers.

Sincerely,

Thomas J. Donohue