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**SUMMARY OF REMARKS BY
DICK HALL**

COMMISSIONER OF TRANSPORTATION FOR THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI
Public Record



**BEFORE THE SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
IN
STB EX PARTE NO. 582
PUBLIC VIEWS ON MAJOR RAIL CONSOLIDATIONS
MARCH 10, 2000**

My name is Dick Hall and I am one of three elected Commissioners of Transportation for the State of Mississippi. Prior to my election as a Commissioner in 1999 I served for 24 years as a Mississippi State Legislator, including 5 years as Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee.

In announcing these hearings you asked for opinions about the timing for railroad mergers and the effect of those mergers on shipper service. I presume your concern here stems from the problems experienced by some shippers in some past railroad mergers.

Like other areas of the country, we in Mississippi have undergone a recent railroad merger – the CN/IC merger. Unlike other recent mergers, ours has gone very smoothly. Not only have there been no service disruptions service has actually improved. CN/IC has trimmed almost four days off the trip between Canada and Jackson, Mississippi. The new railroad has increased the market reach of Mississippi shippers and is allowing our area to play an increasingly important role in the growing north-south traffic between Canada, the U.S. and Mexico. I cannot say for certain if a new CN/BNSF railroad will bring the same advantages to Mississippi. But I think they should be given the opportunity to make their case.

My family has lived in Mississippi for eight generations and I can tell you that for most of that time our state was one of the poorest and least economically developed states in the nation. That has finally started to change and Mississippi is beginning to be an important player in the national and international economy. Building an efficient well-connected transportation network is a critically important part of this change. Those of us responsible for transportation are striving to do that with our highways, our ports, our intermodal facilities and our railroads. If there is a way to make our transportation system even more efficient, to give it more reach and to help us be a growing part of the economy, then we have a responsibility to make that happen. We hope you will help us do that based on our needs not someone else's difficulties and that you will give the BN/CN proposal a timely and fair hearing.

Thank you very much for giving me this opportunity to present my views.