



Port of Seattle

October 18, 2005

Mr. Vernon Williams
Secretary
Surface Transportation Board
1925 K St. NW
Washington DC 20423-0001



Dear Mr. Williams,

On behalf of the Port of Seattle, I am writing to register our strong support for the Staggers Act. It is a critical law that allows railroads to provide needed infrastructure to serve communities throughout our nation and allow for the global economy to work.

The Port of Seattle registered a 20% growth in its container volumes last year and is on the way to a 25%+ year in 2005. The Port will handle more than 2 million TEUs this year to be the fifth busiest container port in North America.

Most of the containers coming through our facilities move very quickly, by rail, to points east, namely Chicago. With the growth we are experiencing, there has been a significant strain on the rail lines that carry cargo containers from our waterfront facilities north and east. Add to all this the fact that the Port of Tacoma, south about 30 miles, is also experiencing record growth and will likely reach the 2 million TEU figure this year as well. We both use the same rail lines which we must share with commuter rail, which is also growing in volume and needing more capacity on the mainline rail system.

More than in any other part of the nation, the Port of Seattle needs strong railroad partners that make a decent return on their investments and can reinvest some of what they make into expanding capacity. Almost 150,000 jobs are related to cargo moving via Port of Seattle marine terminals, most of which is containerized. Because these containers are largely dependent upon good rail infrastructure to be delivered to their ultimate destination, any action that might jeopardize the ability of railroads to make sizeable investments in this infrastructure is not good public policy for our nation. If we were to not have enough rail capacity to move substantial numbers of containers out of the Puget Sound region, we could very possibly lose this business to western Canadian ports. Already, the Vancouver, B.C. Port Authority is significantly expanding its facilities and a new container port will emerge in Prince Rupert, BC in 2007, which will eventually be capable of handling 4 million TEUs. The jobs we have worked so hard to capture, as well as the business and tax revenue we realize would end up going to a foreign nation just across our borders.

P.O. Box 1209
Seattle, WA 98111-1209 USA
(206) 728-3000
FAX (206) 728-3252
www.portseattle.org



Mr. Vernon Williams
Page 2 of 2
October 19, 2005

In the current federal climate of rising deficits, natural disasters that require significant federal investment and a war, now is not the time to negatively impact the revenues of an industry as important as the railroads to our nation's economic health. At the Port of Seattle, we have invested more than one-half billion dollars in marine terminals over the last ten years and in order for us to realize a decent return on that investment for our citizens, we must have a railroad business that is also willing and able to invest in the overall system for transporting goods from Asia to the Midwest and eastern parts of our nation. The rail investment allowed by the Staggers Act has played a key role in aiding our community in its effort to attract and maintain the benefits of international maritime trade. Given the significant growth we are forecasting in the future (possibly 4.3 million TEUs by 2025) additional investment by the railroads in infrastructure will be essential.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written comments and please do not hesitate to call me if you need more detail.

Sincerely,



Mic Dinsmore
Chief Executive Officer