



Gary W. Black
Commissioner

Georgia Department of Agriculture

19 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive SW • Atlanta, Georgia 30334-4201

January 14, 2016

The Honorable Daniel R. Elliott III, Chairman
The Honorable Ann D. Begeman, Vice-Chairman
The Honorable Deb Miller, Member
United States Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20423-0001

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OFFICE OF CHAIRMAN

Dear Chairman Elliott and Surface Transportation Board Members:

As Commissioner of Agriculture for the State of Georgia, I am writing to urge each of you to please closely scrutinize the proposed unsolicited offer by Canadian Pacific Railway (CP) to acquire Norfolk Southern Corporation (NS). From what I have learned, this acquisition would have wide-ranging impacts, including several that pose concern for the agriculture industry in Georgia. I have heard from a number of my agribusiness and forest industry constituents who are quite nervous about the further concentration of rail services and feel compelled to share these concerns with you.

Agriculture in Georgia contributes over \$72 billion per year in economic impact and ranks as the largest industry. NS has been a very active partner in Georgia with both industry and the state to improve critical rail infrastructure for the safe and effective movement of agricultural products. The proposed acquisition raises serious questions about the future of rail investment and infrastructure. It is unclear to what level CP plans to maintain existing NS lines that serve Georgia. This acquisition of NS could further change the landscape and reduce options for rail freight in and out of Georgia, ultimately having a detrimental impact on Georgia's agriculture and food processing sectors. I am justifiably concerned that CP's proposal to slash resources available currently to NS threatens the economy of our state.

With this proposed acquisition by CP, questions arise as to their interest in investing in the rail infrastructure in Georgia that serves the ports. Agriculture in Georgia is a global business and safe, reliable freight rail service to and from Georgia's ports and other ports along the East Coast is paramount in keeping the agricultural industry viable in today's worldwide marketplace.

A NS acquisition by CP will be detrimental to service in and out of critical gateways for agricultural freight traffic in Georgia; put additional pressure on local and regional freight carriers; reduce options to move Georgia grown products; and force Georgia's agribusinesses and producers undue competitive challenges when it comes to moving products to global markets. I urge you to provide close scrutiny over any proposed acquisition by CP.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Gary W. Black