



Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

Peter A. DeFazio
Chairman

Sam Graves, MO
Ranking Member

Katherine W. Dedrick, Staff Director

December 9, 2019

Paul J. Sass, Republican Staff Director

The Honorable Ann D. Begeman
Chairman
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street Southwest
Washington, D.C. 20423

The Honorable Patrick J. Fuchs
Vice Chairman
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street Southwest
Washington, D.C. 20423

The Honorable Martin J. Oberman
Board Member
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street Southwest
Washington, D.C. 20423

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

We write to urge the Surface Transportation Board to incorporate a thorough cost-benefit analysis into its regulatory framework towards future significant rulemakings. We appreciate the Board's recent solicitation of information (Docket No. EP 752) on integrating cost-benefit analysis into STB's rulemaking process. The incorporation of cost-benefit analysis will improve the transparency and clarity of the Board's decisions and help ensure that any new regulatory action appropriately promotes the long-term health of the freight transportation sector for shippers, railroads, and consumers alike.

To meet rail transportation policy mandates, the Board should impose new regulations only where made necessary by compelling public need and after thoroughly weighing the costs and benefits of any proposed actions. As part of this analysis, the Board should consider how its intervention in the private marketplace will affect the broader industry's ability to respond to changing market conditions and to what degree new regulations will interact with existing regulations.

A thorough consideration of the costs and benefits of any regulation is the bedrock upon which a clearly articulated vision for the future of freight transportation is built. We therefore encourage the Board to adopt rules that align its rulemaking proceedings with the best practices of the federal government, taking into account its obligations under existing law.

We also ask that the Board carefully consider the recommendations contained in the Task Force's report. Since the passage of the Staggers Act and the resulting economic deregulation, the rail industry has achieved substantial improvements in safety, made significant investments in infrastructure including PTC implementation, and developed new technologies to improve its operations. It is crucial that the regulatory structure under which railroads, a network industry, operate remains balanced. Regulatory policy must recognize the importance of railroads' ability to invest, grow their networks, and meet the nation's freight transportation demands.

We thank you for your consideration of this matter and look forward to working with you in the future. If you have any questions or need any further information, please contact Michael Falencki on the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure staff at (202) 226-0727.

Sincerely,



Sam Graves, Ranking Member



Lloyd Smucker
Member of Congress



Doug LaMalfa
Member of Congress




Russ Fulcher
Member of Congress



Ken Buck
Member of Congress



Ron Estes
Member of Congress



Roger Williams
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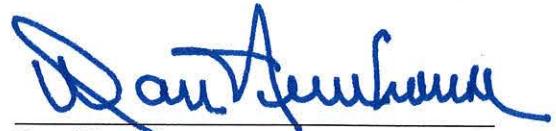
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