



Surface Transportation Board Statement in Support of Railroad Operations April 22, 2020

The Surface Transportation Board (STB or Board) recognizes the important measures that state and local governments are implementing to help protect the public by slowing the spread of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). The Board supports initiatives to combat the virus and safeguard human life.

During this national emergency, the STB has been actively engaged with the freight rail industry, rail customers, and other key stakeholders to monitor freight rail service throughout the nation, learn about the impacts of COVID-19 on the freight rail network, and facilitate information sharing on supply chain issues. Railroads transport a wide range of products crucial to our nation's ability to manage the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the recovery efforts that are beginning, including chemicals, food, medical supplies, and other essential products.

The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) has identified railroad workers as critical employees who carry out functions that are important to public health and safety. As the CISA Guidance states, critical employees may require cross-jurisdiction travel. See CISA, *Guidance on the Essential Critical Infrastructure Workforce: Ensuring Community & National Resilience in COVID-19 Response*, Apr. 17, 2020 (Version 3.0), available at: <https://www.cisa.gov/publication/guidance-essential-critical-infrastructure-workforce>. The Board notes that railroad employees, such as train crews and maintenance workers, must at times cross state borders, and that railroads rely upon a variety of other businesses, including hotels and taxi services, in providing federally-mandated rest periods between railroad workers' shifts.

The Board appreciates the state and local authorities that have followed CISA guidance in adopting programs to curtail the spread of the virus and protect the public. The Board urges state and local authorities, even as they begin to phase-out certain restrictions, to continue to recognize the importance of railroad operations and to support the ability of railroads and their supply chain partners to contribute to the national welfare.

Through its Rail Customer and Public Assistance Program, available at (866) 254-1792 (toll-free) or 202-245-0238, or by email at rcpa@stb.gov, the Board is available to provide guidance on its authority as we move through containment and into recovery consistent with the Guidelines for Opening Up America Again, available at: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/openingamerica/>.