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October 12, 2016

The Honorable Jeff Denham
Member of Congress
4701 Sisk Road, Suite 202
Modesto, CA 95356

Dear Congressman Denham:

We are writing to ask that you and your colleagues support freight policy reforms that are currently under consideration at the Surface Transportation Board (STB).

Because of the growing importance of freight rail issues, a large number of groups joined together to create the Rail Customer Coalition (RCC). The RCC is a diverse collection of trade associations representing manufacturing, agricultural, and energy industries with operations and employees throughout the United States. These businesses depend on the railroads to deliver reliable and affordable service in order to remain competitive in a global market.

The STB is working on several long-overdue practical reforms that will improve the Board's ability to resolve ongoing freight rail problems and remove outdated barriers to obtaining competitive and reliable rail service.

One important reform proposed by the STB would permit a rail customer to request that their shipment be moved to an alternate railroad if one is reasonably accessible. It's called "competitive switching" and was a process that Congress envisioned as a way to promote rail competition. However, due to antiquated rules adopted by the STB in the past, not one rail customer has ever been able to successfully request the transfer of their cargo from railroad to another.

It is really not a radical idea since it is a process that has worked well for the railroads and their customers for more than a century in Canada. Furthermore, the U.S. Department of Agriculture is on record saying, "Competitive switching offers a market-based solution to balance the needs of the railroads and shippers and is in keeping with the goals of the Staggers Act."

You can learn more about competitive switching and other sensible reforms by visiting www.FreightRailReform.com

We urge Congress to allow the STB to do its job and get freight rail back to work for our economy and for the constituents that live and work in your district. Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,

California Bean Shippers Association
California Alfalfa & Forage Association
California League of Food Processors
Western Agricultural Producers Association
California Cotton Ginners and Growers Association

California Grain Feed Association
California Farm Bureau Federation
American Chemistry Council
Western Growers Association