

November 30, 2016

The Honorable Mike Pence  
Office of President-Elect Donald Trump  
1800 F Street NW  
Room G117  
Washington, DC 20270-0117

Dear Vice President-Elect Pence:

Congratulations on your and President-Elect Trump's election victory. A number of important decisions and appointments will be forthcoming. As it pertains to transportation and on behalf of our members in the agriculture community, we write to express our interest in working with you to identify fair, knowledgeable, and impartial Commissioners to lead the Surface Transportation Board (STB).

STB's current Commissioners – Chairman Daniel Elliott III, Vice Chairman Deb Miller, and Commissioner Ann Begeman – have made great progress implementing the *STB Reauthorization Act of 2015* (S. 808) to help the agency better reflect the modern day rail marketplace. STB modernization, including but not limited to the *STB Reauthorization Act of 2015*, will help farmers, agribusinesses, and manufacturers be more competitive in the global marketplace. Safe, efficient, and competitive rail service is good news for all Americans.

The STB was created over 20 years ago. Since that time, much has changed in the freight rail industry. Recognizing “the financially sound railroad industry of today” and not “...the foundering one that required rescue 35 years ago,”<sup>1</sup> Congress unanimously passed the *STB Reauthorization Act of 2015* almost 12 months ago. Since it was signed into law, much has been done to modernize the agency, increase transparency and accountability to its stakeholders, and better balance the needs of railroads and their shipper/receiver customers. But there is much more to do. Many of the regulations and policies put in place decades ago by the STB and its predecessor, the Interstate Commerce Commission, no longer are relevant in today's rail marketplace and need to be updated or eliminated.

President-Elect Trump will have an opportunity to appoint at least two Republican Commissioners to the STB. The STB is a critical oversight Board for shippers in the agriculture sector, many of which are dependent upon a single railroad for service. We urge that the nominees and Chairman of the Board possess the expertise, integrity, impartiality and sound judgment necessary for these important roles. STB Commissioners also should be committed to ongoing efforts to modernize the agency so it can better serve railroads and shippers.

We look forward to working with you toward a successful transition to a new Administration and in support of the agriculture community and our great nation.

Sincerely,

The Fertilizer Institute  
American Farm Bureau Federation  
National Grain and Feed Association  
Agriculture & Commodities Transportation Coalition  
Agricultural Retailers Association  
American Soybean Association  
Corn Refiners Association  
Institute of Shortening and Edible Oils

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<sup>1</sup> *Modernizing Freight Rail Regulation*; Transportation Research Board, National Academy of Sciences; Special Report 318; 2015

National Association of Wheat Growers  
National Barley Growers Association  
National Corn Growers Association  
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives  
National Farmers Union  
National Onion Association  
North American Millers' Association  
Soy Transportation Coalition  
USA Rice

Agribusiness Association of Iowa  
Agribusiness Council of Indiana  
Alabama Agribusiness Council  
Alabama Crop Management Association  
Alabama Feed & Grain Association  
California Grain and Feed Association  
Far West Agribusiness Association  
Florida Fertilizer & Agrichemical Association  
Georgia Agribusiness Council  
Grain and Feed Association of Illinois  
Illinois Fertilizer & Chemical Association  
Kansas Grain and Feed Association  
Michigan Agri-Business Association  
Michigan Bean Shippers  
Minnesota AgriGrowth Council  
Minnesota Grain and Feed Association  
Missouri Agribusiness Association  
Nebraska Agri-Business Association  
Nebraska Grain and Feed Association  
North Dakota Grain Dealers Association  
Northeast Agribusiness and Feed Alliance  
Ohio AgriBusiness Association  
Oklahoma Agribusiness Retailers Association  
Oklahoma Grain and Feed Association  
Oregonians for Food & Shelter  
PennAg Industries Association  
Rocky Mountain Agribusiness Association  
SE Minnesota Grain & Feed Dealers  
South Carolina Fertilizer & AgriChemical Association  
South Dakota Agri-Business Association  
South Dakota Grain & Feed Association  
Texas Ag Industries Association  
Texas Grain and Feed Association  
Virginia Agribusiness Council  
Western Plant Health Association  
Wisconsin Agri-Business Association  
Wyoming Ag-Business Association

Cc: Mr. Nick Ayers, Senior Advisor to the Vice President-Elect, President-Elect's Transition Team  
Mr. Rick Dearborn, Executive Director, President-Elect's Transition Team  
Mr. Joel Leftwich, President-Elect's Transition Team  
The Honorable Shirley Ybarra, President-Elect's Transition Team