



July, 23 2020

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Confirmation of Surface Transportation Board Nominations

Dear Senator:

We are writing to you on behalf of the Rail Customer Coalition to strongly support the confirmation of Michelle A. Schultz and Robert Primus to serve as members of the Surface Transportation Board (STB).

As you know the Board plays a vital role in resolving freight rail issues and ensuring that goods can efficiently and affordably be shipped by rail. Unfortunately, the STB has been operating for several years with only three of the five Board members filled by Congress. We urge you and your colleagues in the Senate to confirm the nominees as quickly as possible.

The Rail Customer Coalition is composed of more than 70 leading associations representing American manufacturing, agriculture, and energy industries, including some of the nation's largest freight rail customers. Our members collectively provide more than seven million jobs directly, support millions more throughout the United States, and generate nearly \$5 trillion in economic output each year. Our members depend on the U.S. freight rail network to deliver reliable and affordable service in order to remain competitive in a global market.

Small and large businesses alike need a fair and transparent system that facilitates, rather than hinders, their ability to efficiently move goods to market. The Staggers Rail Act, which celebrates its 40th anniversary this year, helped save the rail industry, and initially led to lower rates and a more efficient rail system. But the Act's benefits are no longer so widely shared as a lack of competition among railroads – due to widespread industry consolidation – has led to steep premiums for the same or lower quality of service and the imposition of operational changes without concern for their negative impact on shippers.

The confirmation of Ms. Schultz and Mr. Primus will allow the Board to live up to its obligations under the Staggers Act and continue to pursue sensible reforms that will benefit everyone. Such

reforms will increase access to competitive freight rail service and market-based rates, while cutting red tape and allowing the Board to operate more effectively.

We look forward to working with your office to confirm these well-qualified nominees, and to advance reforms that will help keep our economy moving.

Sincerely,

The Rail Customer Coalition