

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0103

February 9, 2023

Martin J. Oberman
Chairman
United States Surface Transportation Board
393 E Street SW
Washington, D.C. 20423

RE: Surface Transportation Board Hearing – February 14, 2024

Chairman Oberman and members of the board:

I write in advance of your hearing on February 14, 2024, with the National Passenger Railroad Corporation (Amtrak), CSX Transportation, Inc. (CSX), Norfolk Southern Railway Company (NS), and the Alabama State Port Authority (the Port), or “Parties,” concerning the return of Amtrak operations in the Gulf Coast region.

It has been and will continue to be of utmost importance that the return of Amtrak to the region does not impede operations at the Port, which is vital for the economy in all 67 of Alabama’s counties. I appreciate the STB’s attention to this and its support of all Parties in their application to and execution of the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Program grant. This collaborative effort resulted in \$178 million of funding for track and signal improvements, upgrades to grade crossings, and improvements to passenger stations while maintaining freight service fluidity and reliability along the Gulf Coast Corridor.

I welcome the ongoing commitment of all stakeholders involved in executing the CRISI grant agreement, which will accommodate freight rail needs associated with the return of Amtrak operations. While the CRISI grant funding will be impactful to realizing the return of service, I appreciate the consideration of ongoing costs associated with starting the service that are outside of the scope of the grant. Specifically, I urge stakeholders to continue their efforts to understand what the operating costs of Amtrak’s presence in Alabama will be upon its resumption of service after almost 20 years and all related expectations of how those costs will be funded.

In the Surface Transportation Board hearing on February 14, I urge you to give all due consideration to the important work of every stakeholder involved in the return of passenger rail to the region. Please do not hesitate to contact my office with any further questions.

Sincerely,



Katie Boyd Britt
United States Senator

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