

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,”¹ 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

¹ *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