



Freight Rail Customer Alliance

July 10, 2017

The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart, Chairman
Transportation, Housing & Urban Development,
and Related Agencies Subcommittee
House Appropriations Committee
2358 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David Price, Ranking Member
Transportation, Housing & Urban Development,
and Related Agencies Subcommittee
House Appropriations Committee
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Diaz-Balart and Ranking Member Price:

The Freight Rail Customer Alliance (FRCA) – an umbrella organization including trade associations representing more than 3,500 manufacturing, agriculture and alternative fuels companies, electric utilities, and their customers – thanks you and your Appropriation Committee colleagues for continuing to support freight rail shipper issues.

FRCA sincerely thanks you and your colleagues for providing \$37 million for the Surface Transportation Board (STB) in the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2017, P.L. 115 - We especially appreciate that, out of this amount, \$2.046 million is directed to improve the STB's information technology (IT) infrastructure.

FRCA, and its members listed on the following pages, strongly support a final FY '18 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (THUD) appropriation (rather than a **Continuing Resolution**). Moreover, we request that you provide \$37.1 million for the STB with \$2.401 million directed for IT improvements in a final FY 2018 appropriation. This is the same amount as recommended by President Trump in his FY 2018 Budget proposal.

The **Surface Transportation Board (STB) Reauthorization Act of 2015** (P.L. 114-110), providing the agency's first reauthorization since 1998, gave the STB new responsibilities. The STB needs to have adequate annual appropriated funds in order to provide necessary and effective oversight of our country's growing reliance on freight rail. Freight rail is a vital component of our nation's economy. It is relied upon by farmers to deliver crops to market and by coal-burning utilities and propane suppliers to receive the fuel they need to serve their customers. Freight rail also enhances our global competitiveness.

Of particular importance is adequate funding for enhancements to the STB's outdated IT system. Freight rail shippers rely heavily on rail industry data provided through the STB to help: 1) make vital daily and longer term operational decisions; 2) forecast industry emerging trends; and, 3) monitor a railroad's level of service and performance.

Although the STB has made positive strides in improving its data collection and distribution processes, an additional \$2 million in funding is needed to make longstanding IT upgrades. This will allow the STB to comply with the transparency requirements of the **STB Reauthorization Act of 2015** while providing all industry stakeholders with timely data in a usable format.

As the House THUD Appropriations Subcommittee considers the FY 2018 THUD Appropriations, FRCA respectfully requests that your Subcommittee funds the STB at the pending \$37.1 million for FY '18 to help ensure the Board can successfully meet its numerous obligations and requirements for all stakeholders into the next Fiscal Year.



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Your ongoing commitment to the STB, by appropriating these necessary funds, is greatly needed.

Thank you for your continued leadership and consideration.

Sincerely,

Ann Warner
Executive Director

cc: Representative Charlie Dent
Representative David Joyce, Vice Chair
Representative John Culberson
Representative David Young
Representative David Valado
Representative Tom Graves

Representative Michael Quigley
Representative Katherine Clark
Representative Pete Aguilar



Freight Rail Customer Alliance Members

American Public Power Association, Washington, D.C

The American Public Power Association (APPA) is the service organization for the nation's more than 2,000 community-owned electric utilities. Collectively, these utilities serve more than 48 million Americans in every state except Hawaii.

Arizona Electric Power Cooperative, Inc., Benson, Arizona

Provides power to more than 147,000 electric meters and 350,000 people in Arizona, California and New Mexico.

Basin Electric Power Cooperative, Bismarck, North Dakota

Serving more 120-member systems that provide power and services to 2.9 million consumers in parts of North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming, Colorado, Minnesota, Iowa, Nebraska, Montana, and New Mexico.

Dairyland Power Cooperative, LaCrosse, Wisconsin

A generation and transmission cooperative (G&T) that provided the wholesale electrical requirements for 25 electric distribution cooperatives and 20 municipal utilities in Upper Midwest: Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota, and Illinois.

Edison Electric Institute, Washington, D.C.

The Edison Electric Institute (EEI) is the association that represents all U.S. investor-owned electric companies. EEI members provide electricity for 220 million Americans, operate in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, and directly employ more than 500,000 workers.

Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas, Little Rock, Arkansas

Electric distribution cooperatives that provide power to service areas covering more than 60 percent of the land area in Arkansas, including more than 500,000 homes, farms and businesses.

Lafayette Utilities System, Lafayette, Louisiana

Providing quality electric, water and wastewater service to consumers in Lafayette, Louisiana.

Lincoln Electric System, Lincoln, Nebraska

Services approximately 200 square miles within Lancaster County in Nebraska, comprising the cities of Lincoln, Prairie Home, Waverly, Walton, Cheney, and Emerald.

Missouri River Energy Services, Sioux Falls, South Dakota

Providing power and other energy services to fifty-nine municipally-owned and operated electric utilities in Iowa, Minnesota, South Dakota and North Dakota.

Municipal Electric Authority of Georgia, Atlanta, Georgia

Generation & Transmission provider to 49 municipal systems throughout Georgia.



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National Propane Gas Association (NPGA), Washington D.C.

The national trade association of the U.S. propane industry with a membership of approximately 2,800 companies in all 50 states, which also includes 38 affiliated state or regional associations and members in 19 foreign countries.

National Rural Electrical Cooperative Association, Arlington, Virginia

NRECA is the national service organization for more than 900 not-for-profit rural electric cooperatives and public power districts providing retail electric service to more than 42 million consumers in 47 states and whose retail sales account for approximately 12 percent of total electricity sales in the United States.

North Carolina Electric Membership Corporation, Raleigh, North Carolina

Supplying power to more than 2.4 million people in 27 cooperatives throughout North Carolina.

Oglethorpe Power Corporation, Tucker, Georgia

Oglethorpe is one of the nation's largest power supply cooperatives with more than \$9.5 billion in assets serving 38 Electric Membership Corporations which, collectively, provide electricity to more than 4.2 million Georgia citizens.

Western Fuels Association, Westminster, Colorado

Western Fuels Association (WFA) is a not-for profit cooperative supplying coal and transportation services to consumer-owned electric utilities throughout the Great Plains, Rocky Mountains and Southwest regions of the United States.