

Freight Rail Customers Welcome New Congress, Urge Action on Service Issues

In a joint letter to House and Senate offices, the Freight Rail Customers Alliance, the National Industrial Transportation League, and the Private Railcar Food and Beverage Association are urging members of the 116th Congress to act quickly on rail service issues affecting their members. The three organizations representing companies that use freight railroads to ship their products—everything from fuel sources, to chemicals, to paper products, to food and beverage items—noted the pivotal role that freight rail plays in the U.S. economy and in enhancing our nation’s global competitiveness.

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The three groups warned, however, that ongoing service issues with the freight rail system are jeopardizing the ability of shippers to effectively serve their customers and grow their businesses. These issues include a lack of meaningful competition and the inability of regulators—specifically the Surface Transportation Board (STB), the agency principally responsible for overseeing U.S. railroads—to quickly address rail service complaints.

The letter called on senators and representatives to take the following actions:

- Urge the White House to nominate a qualified candidate to fill a seat on the Surface Transportation Board and for the Senate to expeditiously move the confirmation process (there are two current vacancies on the Board);
- Encourage the STB to act promptly on several significant proceedings that have been pending before the board for years; and
- Hold hearings on freight rail shipper issues to build a legislative record that supports the drafting and passage of legislation reauthorizing the STB (the current authorizing law expires in September 2020).

“Freight rail transportation is a vital component of our nation’s economy,” the letter states. “... We encourage the 116th Congress to focus on the many critical issues affecting freight rail shippers and, indirectly, all Americans.”

About the Freight Rail Customer Alliance

The Freight Rail Customer Alliance (FRCA) is an alliance of freight rail shippers impacted by the continued unrestrained dominance of freight railroad operators over rail-dependent shippers.

About the National Industrial Transportation League

The National Industrial Transportation League (NITL) serves as “the shippers’ voice” on freight transportation issues and enhances shippers’ professional development.



About the Private Railcar Food and Beverage Association

The Private Railcar Food and Beverage Association (PRFBA) represents leading food and beverage companies that manage and utilize private railcar fleets.



Contact Information

Andrew Schwarz

National Industrial Transportation Leagu

(703) 556-7160