



Freight Rail Customer Alliance

May 3, 2016

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.

The enactment last December of the *Surface Transportation Board (STB) Reauthorization Act of 2015* (P.L. 114-110) was a stellar achievement in helping the Board operate more effectively and with greater transparency – especially given present-day market challenges and opportunities facing both shippers and the railroads.

The subsequent increased funding for the STB approved by Congress in the FY 2016 Omnibus (P.L. 114-13) was a crucial step in helping to implement this new *Act*. Our sincere thanks.

FRCA, and its members listed on the following pages, request that for FY '17 appropriations, you provide the highest possible appropriation level for the STB. The STB needs to have the adequate annual appropriated funds to provide necessary and effective oversight over our country's growing reliance on freight rail. Freight rail is a vital component of our nation's economy to help our farmers produce, deliver grains and agricultural products to market, heat our homes and businesses, ensure our drinking water is safe, and enhance our global competitiveness.

Of particular importance is adequate funding of enhancements to the STB's outdated information technology (IT) system. Freight rail shippers heavily rely on 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 allowing the STB to provide transparency, uniformity, and timeliness when reporting and displaying data while providing a



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streamlined process for all stakeholders when accessing data. We respectfully request that the Subcommittee provide at least \$2 million of the STB's appropriation for the much-needed IT system enhancements while also ensuring that the Board has the appropriated funding it needs to successfully meet its numerous obligations and requirements.

Thank you for your continued leadership and consideration.

Sincerely,

Ann Warner
Executive Director

cc: Representative David Joyce
Representative John Culberson
Representative Kevin Yoder, Vice Chair
Representative David Jolly
Representative David Young
Representative Evan Jenkins
Chairman Harold Rogers, Ex Officio

Representative Michael Quigley
Representative Timothy Ryan
Representative Henry Cuellar
Ranking Member Nita Lowey, Ex Officio



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, with a membership of approximately 2,800 companies in all 50 states, 38 affiliated state or regional associations, and members in 19 foreign countries, representing every segment of the U.S. propane industry.

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.

Salt River Project, Phoenix, Arizona

Providing electricity and water to more than 2 million people in Central Arizona.

Tri-State Generation & Transmission Association, Denver, Colorado

A wholesale electric power supplier generating and transporting electricity throughout a 250,000 square-mile territory across Colorado, Nebraska, New Mexico and Wyoming.