



July 1, 2022

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden  
President of the United States  
Washington, DC 20500

The Honorable Kamala Harris  
Vice President of the United States  
Washington, DC 20500

**RE: Appointment of a Presidential Emergency Board (PEB) for Rail Labor Negotiations**

Dear President Biden and Vice President Harris:

On behalf of American agriculture, manufacturers, refiners, and energy producers, we write you today regarding critical ongoing railroad labor negotiations. The undersigned trade associations are deeply concerned about a potential work stoppage if a negotiated solution fails to emerge. We urge the Administration to take action to facilitate a workable settlement and prevent catastrophic disruptions to the freight rail network.

The United States freight rail system is a key component of the national and global supply chain, and rightfully your Administration has identified freight rail enhancements and rail service issues as a priority. Over the years, the U.S. railroad system has evolved into a broad network, delivering many vital goods throughout the country. The U.S.' extensive rail network moves significant quantities of energy products across the country such as coal, ethanol, wind turbine components and crude oil. Rail also transports key petroleum products such as propane, asphalt, lubricants, gasoline, jet fuel and other necessities people rely on every day.

Along with energy products, railroads haul a wide variety of goods such as agricultural and food products, raw materials such as chemicals and finished products including electronics, auto parts and furniture. Further, rail is a critical for the export of many of U.S. products and is challenging the ability to fill the global gap caused by the war in Ukraine. The ability to grow and support domestic and international commerce also hinges on efficient and reliable transportation systems – networks that have been challenged like never before in the past two years.

As was highlighted by numerous rail shippers in a two-day Surface Transportation Board hearing this past May, the rail network is currently experiencing significant service disruptions. An additional disruption of rail service related to a labor dispute would push an already stressed rail network to the brink and have direct and immediate as well as cascading impacts on the nation's food, energy, and other vital industrial and consumer supplies and costs. It would also impact transportation, construction, and nearly every sector of the U.S. economy. It would hit every point across our nation's supply chain.

It is our understanding that the National Mediation Board recently ended the mediation process between the Class I freight railroads and major rail unions representing 115,000 employees. Our associations join with others in calling for the appointment of a Presidential Emergency Board (PEB), to conduct hearings and issue settlement recommendations in a timely fashion.

While we fully understand that the potential recommendations of a PEB are nonbinding, history has demonstrated that the parties have previously entered into voluntary agreements as a direct result of the employment of this process in prior instances of labor/management negotiations.

It is of critical importance to all sectors of the economy that these parties reach an amicable agreement and avoid any service disruption.

Therefore, our organizations respectfully request the utilization of your authority under the Railway Labor Act, to immediately appoint respected, experienced, and impartial arbitrators to the PEB. The appointment of arbiters with rail related expertise would be particularly important to ensuring a positive outcome to the process.

Americans and the world depend on our nation's supply chain and the Administration's engagement to ensure uninterrupted rail service, which is vital to the economy. Any rail work stoppage in the United States would exacerbate the ongoing supply chain challenges, upend the U.S economy and hurt American consumers and jobs.

Thank you for your continued engagement and responsiveness on this and other supply chain challenges.

Sincerely,



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CC: Hon. Nancy Pelosi  
Hon. Charles Schumer  
Hon. Kevin McCarthy  
Hon. Mitch McConnell  
Hon. Peter DeFazio  
Hon. Patty Murray  
Hon. Sam Graves  
Hon. Richard Burr