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February 7, 2022

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**By E-Filing**

Cynthia T. Brown  
Chief of the Section of Administration  
Office of Proceedings  
Surface Transportation Board  
395 E Street SW  
Washington, D.C. 20423

ENTERED  
Office of Proceedings  
February 17, 2022  
Part of  
Public Record

Re: Gulf Coast Passenger Service Between New Orleans and Mobile STB Finance Docket No. 36496

Ms. Brown:

Halter Marine is located in Pascagoula, Jackson County, Mississippi. I write on behalf of Halter Marine to express concerns regarding the impact on freight rail service of Amtrak's proposed Gulf Coast passenger service between New Orleans, Louisiana and Mobile, Alabama.

Halter Marine is negotiating a partnership agreement with CSXT to transport raw materials to our facility. Freight rail service will be critical to the success of our business. CSXT will support our supply chain by providing access to two major port terminals in New Orleans and Mobile through which we can access greater domestic and international markets. The quality-of-service CSXT provides makes freight rail the most efficient transportation alternative to grow our business.

CSXT and Norfolk Southern Railway Company have submitted evidence, including a Rail Traffic Controller study, that shows the introduction of Gulf Coast passenger service between New Orleans and Mobile may cause harm to freight service. This harm could manifest itself through decreased freight train speeds and delay as well as operational variability.

To be clear, Halter Marine does not oppose Gulf Coast passenger service and acknowledges the merits of that service. However, it is important that the introduction of this passenger service not decrease the quality of freight service provided by CSXT. It is our understanding that CSXT and NSR have proposed infrastructure projects that would support Amtrak's desired passenger service while protecting the quality of freight service. We urge the Board to consider the merits of these projects.

With respect,



R. L. Merchant  
President & CEO

RLM/ms

cc: FD 36496 Service List