

February 28, 2023

United States Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20423-0001

Via e-filing – www.stb.gov

Re: Docket No. EP 526 (Sub-No.16); Nomination to Fill Small Shipper Vacancy on the Railroad-Shipper Transportation Advisory Council

Dear Chairman Oberman and Members of the Surface Transportation Board:

The National Association of Chemical Distributors (NACD) is pleased to nominate Richard G. Erstad to the Surface Transportation Board's (STB) Railroad-Shipper Transportation Advisory Council (RSTAC).

Mr. Erstad has served as Vice President, General Counsel, and Secretary of Hawkins, Inc., a leading specialty chemical and ingredients company, since 2008. Headquartered in Minnesota, the publicly traded company has 49 facilities in 24 states and receives products into its facilities by barge, rail, and truck. Over Mr. Erstad's tenure at the company, Hawkins has grown from \$200 million in annual sales to \$775 million and now employs almost 900 people throughout the central and southern United States, operating a fleet of over 250 trucks.

NACD believes Mr. Erstad is the perfect candidate for filling a role on the RSTAC due to his first-hand knowledge of the unique and challenging issues rail shippers face. Hawkins annually receives more than 75 barges, 4,000 railcars, and tens of thousands of truck shipments into its facilities located throughout the entire Mississippi River basin, from Montana to the Florida Keys and from Texas to Ohio. The traffic handled by Hawkins is almost exclusively hazardous material, including rail cars of chlorine gas that are vital to maintaining the safety of our nation's drinking water. Mr. Erstad understands the need for railroads and industry to work together for the well-being and economy of the United States.

Through his involvement with NACD, including his tenure as chair of NACD's Regulatory Affairs Committee, Mr. Erstad understands not only the role of the industry-sponsored Responsible Distribution program but also the importance of proper government oversight when transporting goods across the U.S. In addition to his work in the chemical industry, Mr. Erstad is active in his home community of St. Paul, Minnesota, and serves on the Council of Trustees at



South Dakota State University. His commitment to his family, business, and community demonstrates his will to serve. Mr. Erstad is able to serve as a member of the RSTAC effective immediately upon appointment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric R. Byer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Eric" being more prominent than the last name "Byer".

Eric R. Byer
President and CEO

Advancing Stewardship, Creating Connections™

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