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STATE OF ARKANSAS

House of Representatives

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REPRESENTATIVE

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DISTRICT: 62

Counties:

Part Arkansas
Part Desha
Lee
Part Monroe
Phillips
Part St. Francis

COMMITTEES:

Public Transportation
State Agencies and Governmental Affairs
Joint Performance Review
Legislative Joint Auditing Committee

February 9, 2026

The Honorable Patrick J. Fuchs, Chairman
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street SW
Washington, DC 20423

Dear Chairman Fuchs:

As a farmer and a long-time public servant, I have seen firsthand how closely rural Arkansas is tied to dependable infrastructure. Agriculture does not operate in a vacuum. Farmers rely on efficient transportation networks to move crops, inputs, and finished goods to market, and when freight systems are unreliable, it directly affects farm margins and rural livelihoods.

For that reason, I support the proposed Union Pacific–Norfolk Southern merger and what it could mean for the people who work the land and sustain our rural communities. Arkansas producers compete not just with neighboring states, but in national and global markets. A stronger, more connected rail network would help reduce shipping delays, improve reliability, and lower transportation costs for farmers and agribusinesses across the state.

Those benefits extend beyond the farm gate. When transportation works, rural communities are better positioned to attract processing facilities, storage operations, and manufacturing plants that provide stable jobs and keep small towns viable. These opportunities help young families stay local and invest in the future of their communities.

This merger is not about change, but with the right leadership, appropriate oversight, which I believe stands to hold in this deal, prioritizing the focus on service and safety, it represents a practical investment in Arkansas agriculture and the rural economies that depend on it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mark D. McElroy".

Mark D. McElroy
State Representative
District 62

MM/sj

