



302089

April 21, 2021

Ms. Allison Davis
Director, Office of Proceedings
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street SW
Washington, DC 20423

ENTERED
Office of Proceedings
April 22, 2021
Part of
Public Record

Re: Surface Transportation Board Docket FD_36496
ID 301767 - National Railroad Passenger Corp
Under 49 U.S.C. Section 24308(e) - CSX
Transportation, Inc., and Norfolk Southern
Corporation.

Dear Ms. Davis:

The Alabama District Export Council (ADEC) is a volunteer organization of businesses, government agencies and non-profits that provide expertise and resources to facilitate U.S. / Alabama export trade. The ADEC leadership is writing to urge the Surface Transportation Board to deny Amtrak an Order to restore passenger service between Mobile, Alabama and New Orleans, Louisiana, and compel Amtrak to complete its Rail Traffic Control Study with supplemental engineering and cost report.

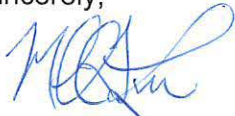
Many of our member businesses rely on the CSX railroad to carry (ores, feedstocks, raw materials or finished products) to/from the public terminals at the Port of Mobile, to interchange with other railroads to access our public seaport terminals or to access US based customers. In some cases, freight continues through the port to reach our customers positioned along CSX's U.S. Gulf coast east/west mainline. Exporters have applauded and supported public / private investments at the port's public terminals with the single objective to generate capacity, attract carrier services and to grow our markets. Investments at the Port of Mobile have delivered new customers, retained or expanded our businesses, and attracted new industry, making Alabama's port one of the fastest growth ports in the nation. In turn, our regional businesses have been able to compete globally and create American jobs.

On February 26, 2021, the ADEC, and its coalition of 24 business and trade associations, expressed concerns to Alabama's elected and U.S. Department of Transportation officials over Amtrak's declaration that it would initiate new passenger rail service at Mobile. Our coalition firmly believes proper study and infrastructure investment is necessary to ensure freight and container intermodal rail service is not degraded, and to ensure there is sufficient capacity for continued freight and container intermodal growth at the Port of Mobile. Congestion and associated delays adversely impact supply chains and transportation rates. Amtrak initiated a freight modeling study and a supplemental engineering and cost assessment in early 2020, only to walk away without the benefit of a completed study with data to support their position that passenger rail will not impact the Port of Mobile. Now, we understand Amtrak is seeking an injunction from the Surface Transportation Board to bypass this customary step of assessing operational service and capacity in this important freight corridor.

ADEC / Surface Transportation Board Letter
Page Two
April 21, 2021

The ADEC respectfully requests the Surface Transportation Board require Amtrak complete their modeling study and supplemental rail infrastructure and cost assessments to identify the improvements necessary to efficiently and cost competitively support both freight rail and passenger services at Mobile, Alabama.

Sincerely,



Michael B. Lee
Chairman

C: Parties of Record



February 26, 2021

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Senator
United States Senate
304 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Shelby:

The Alabama District Export Council (ADEC) is a volunteer organization drawn from Alabama businesses, governmental agencies, and non-profits. Established in 1973 by the President and the Secretary of Commerce, District Export Councils are mandated to support the export expansion activities of the U.S. Department of Commerce and serve as a link between the business community and U.S. Export Assistance Centers (USEAC) across the United States. Our members have in-depth knowledge and experience in international business.

The ADEC and the listed businesses and industry below are writing to express deep reservations regarding the possibility of state and federal funding for new passenger rail service in Mobile County, Ala. The Alabama State Port Authority (ASPA), rail carriers and Alabama businesses have been closely monitoring a multiyear effort by the Southern Rail Commission (SRC) and Amtrak to establish new passenger rail service on the CSX corridor in Mobile County.

CSX's heavily used single track freight corridor serves the public terminals at Alabama's only seaport. Rail freight and containerized cargo shippers from across Alabama utilize CSX's southbound corridors and often cross on to the CSX Gulf Coast corridor to access Alabama's seaport and domestic markets to the east and west of Alabama. Shippers leverage efficiencies and capacity afforded by CSX 10,000 ft. to 15,000 ft. unit trains to access customers and receive necessary materials for manufacturing, mining, retail distribution and agribusiness, to name just a few examples. Currently, all rail sidings in the CSX corridor, including Alabama's coastal corridor, are 10,000 feet or less. Yet, under federal law, freight and container intermodal rail traffic must yield track right of way to passenger rail traffic.

To be clear, CSX would not be the only rail carrier impacted by new passenger rail service along the Gulf Coast. All of Alabama's Class I railroads and several short line railroads carrying merchandise, raw materials and containerized cargoes for Alabama shippers converge at the Port Authority's terminal rail yard and cross the CSX corridor to access the public seaport terminals. With over \$1.3 billion invested to date and another \$715 million in state and federal investment underway at Alabama's only seaport, delays and added congestion on the CSX line equate to customer dissatisfaction, increased costs to shippers and adverse impact on business competitiveness across the state. These kinds of impacts directly correlate to jobs retention and creation initiatives across Alabama.

Over a year ago, when the state and the City of Mobile were asked to contribute tax payer dollars to the Amtrak/SRC project, the Alabama State Port Authority, Governor Kay Ivey and the Mobile City Council urged a freight impact study and infrastructure cost analysis be conducted to identify actual freight and shipper impacts at one of the nation's fastest growth seaports, and more importantly, to identify the necessary improvements and true public costs to establishing passenger rail in this single-track corridor. State and municipal funding was contingent upon the completion of that study. As we understand, the objective of the freight study was to determine how both existing commerce and Amtrak passenger

interests could be accommodated without adverse impacts to host railroads and their Alabama-based customers, Alabama's seaport and the state's ever-growing business recruitment, retention, and expansion initiatives.

Amtrak, with the support of the SRC, CSX and Norfolk Southern, embarked upon the above-mentioned study last spring, and the process has been funded in part by federal taxpayer dollars. The parties, with Amtrak leading the way, selected HDR, a nationally recognized firm with railroad expertise and credibility amongst rail carriers and regulators alike, to perform the necessary study work. Despite pandemic induced delays in the process, the study was targeted to be complete in first quarter of 2021.

Then, in late January, the Alabama State Port Authority learned that Amtrak had abruptly and unilaterally decided not to continue with the study. Furthermore, it was determined that Amtrak had informed the other parties that it intended to "restore" passenger rail in the Gulf Coast corridor effective January 2022, declaring adequate infrastructure existed to accommodate both freight and passengers.

The ADEC and the listed business interests ask Alabama's Congressional delegation, the State of Alabama, and the City and County of Mobile to send a strong message to Amtrak by withholding public subsidy for this proposed project. We further ask your support in asking Amtrak to live up to its promise of working with the other parties to complete the study work necessary to demonstrate the full impact of passenger rail on Alabama's seaport and the state's diversified commercial interests.

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SSA Gulf, Inc.

Sincerely,



Michael B. Lee, Sr.
Chairman

C: Amit Bose, Deputy Administrator, Federal Railroad Administration
Martin J. Oberman, Chair, Surface Transportation Board
Dayne Cutrell, Chief of Staff, Office of U.S. Senator Richard Shelby



February 26, 2021

The Honorable Tommy Tuberville
Senator
United States Senate
B40A Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Tuberville:

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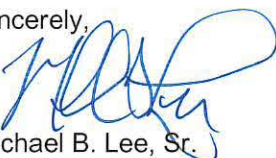
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Sincerely,



Michael B. Lee, Sr.
Chairman

C: Amit Bose, Deputy Administrator, Federal Railroad Administration
Martin J. Oberman, Chair, Surface Transportation Board
Stephen Boyd, Chief of Staff, Office of U.S. Senator Tommy Tuberville



February 26, 2021

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
Congressman
United States House of Representatives
266 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Aderholt:

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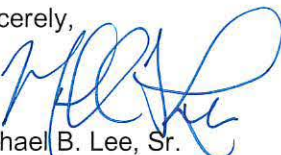
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Sincerely,



Michael B. Lee, Sr.
Chairman

C: Amit Bose, Deputy Administrator, Federal Railroad Administration
Martin J. Oberman, Chair, Surface Transportation Board



February 26, 2021

The Honorable Jerry Carl
Congressman
United States House of Representatives
1330 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Carl:

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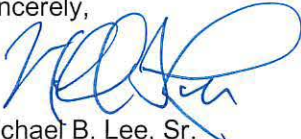
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Sincerely,



Michael B. Lee, Sr.
Chairman

C: Amit Bose, Deputy Administrator, Federal Railroad Administration
Martin J. Oberman, Chair, Surface Transportation Board



February 26, 2021

The Honorable Barry Moore
Congressman
United States House of Representatives
1504 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Moore:

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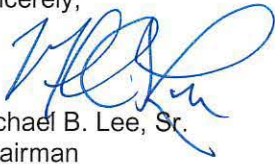
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Congressman
United States House of Representatives
2569 Rayburn House Office Building
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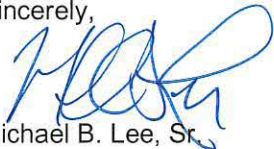
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The ADEC and the listed business interests ask Alabama's Congressional delegation, the State of Alabama, and the City and County of Mobile to send a strong message to Amtrak by withholding public subsidy for this proposed project. We further ask your support in asking Amtrak to live up to its promise of working with the other parties to complete the study work necessary to demonstrate the full impact of passenger rail on Alabama's seaport and the state's diversified commercial interests.

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Mobile Steamship Association
Outokumpu USA
Premier Bulk Stevedoring, LLC

Alabama Egg & Poultry Association
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CSA
Georgia-Pacific Packaging & Cellulose
Millard Maritime Merchants Transfer Co.
Mobile Asphalt, LLC
Nucor Corporation
Page & Jones, Inc.
SSA Gulf, Inc.

Sincerely,



Michael B. Lee, Sr.
Chairman

C: Amit Bose, Deputy Administrator, Federal Railroad Administration
Martin J. Oberman, Chair, Surface Transportation Board



February 26, 2021

The Honorable Mo Brooks
Congressman
United States House of Representatives
2185 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Brooks:

The Alabama District Export Council (ADEC) is a volunteer organization drawn from Alabama businesses, governmental agencies, and non-profits. Established in 1973 by the President and the Secretary of Commerce, District Export Councils are mandated to support the export expansion activities of the U.S. Department of Commerce and serve as a link between the business community and U.S. Export Assistance Centers (USEAC) across the United States. Our members have in-depth knowledge and experience in international business.

The ADEC and the listed businesses and industry below are writing to express deep reservations regarding the possibility of state and federal funding for new passenger rail service in Mobile County, Ala. The Alabama State Port Authority (ASPA), rail carriers and Alabama businesses have been closely monitoring a multiyear effort by the Southern Rail Commission (SRC) and Amtrak to establish new passenger rail service on the CSX corridor in Mobile County.

CSX's heavily used single track freight corridor serves the public terminals at Alabama's only seaport. Rail freight and containerized cargo shippers from across Alabama utilize CSX's southbound corridors and often cross on to the CSX Gulf Coast corridor to access Alabama's seaport and domestic markets to the east and west of Alabama. Shippers leverage efficiencies and capacity afforded by CSX 10,000 ft. to 15,000 ft. unit trains to access customers and receive necessary materials for manufacturing, mining, retail distribution and agribusiness, to name just a few examples. Currently, all rail sidings in the CSX corridor, including Alabama's coastal corridor, are 10,000 feet or less. Yet, under federal law, freight and container intermodal rail traffic must yield track right of way to passenger rail traffic.

To be clear, CSX would not be the only rail carrier impacted by new passenger rail service along the Gulf Coast. All of Alabama's Class I railroads and several short line railroads carrying merchandise, raw materials and containerized cargoes for Alabama shippers converge at the Port Authority's terminal rail yard and cross the CSX corridor to access the public seaport terminals. With over \$1.3 billion invested to date and another \$715 million in state and federal investment underway at Alabama's only seaport, delays and added congestion on the CSX line equate to customer dissatisfaction, increased costs to shippers and adverse impact on business competitiveness across the state. These kinds of impacts directly correlate to jobs retention and creation initiatives across Alabama.

Over a year ago, when the state and the City of Mobile were asked to contribute tax payer dollars to the Amtrak/SRC project, the Alabama State Port Authority, Governor Kay Ivey and the Mobile City Council urged a freight impact study and infrastructure cost analysis be conducted to identify actual freight and shipper impacts at one of the nation's fastest growth seaports, and more importantly, to identify the necessary improvements and true public costs to establishing passenger rail in this single-track corridor. State and municipal funding was contingent upon the completion of that study. As we understand, the objective of the freight study was to determine how both existing commerce and Amtrak passenger

interests could be accommodated without adverse impacts to host railroads and their Alabama-based customers, Alabama's seaport and the state's ever-growing business recruitment, retention, and expansion initiatives.

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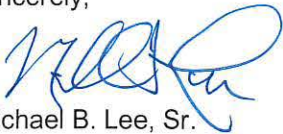
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Sincerely,



Michael B. Lee, Sr.
Chairman

C: Amit Bose, Deputy Administrator, Federal Railroad Administration
Martin J. Oberman, Chair, Surface Transportation Board



February 26, 2021

The Honorable Gary Palmer
Congressman
United States House of Representatives
170 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Palmer:

The Alabama District Export Council (ADEC) is a volunteer organization drawn from Alabama businesses, governmental agencies, and non-profits. Established in 1973 by the President and the Secretary of Commerce, District Export Councils are mandated to support the export expansion activities of the U.S. Department of Commerce and serve as a link between the business community and U.S. Export Assistance Centers (USEAC) across the United States. Our members have in-depth knowledge and experience in international business.

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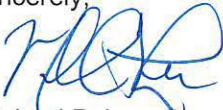
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Sincerely,



Michael B. Lee, Sr.
Chairman

C: Amit Bose, Deputy Administrator, Federal Railroad Administration
Martin J. Oberman, Chair, Surface Transportation Board



February 26, 2021

The Honorable Terri A. Sewell
Congresswoman
United States House of Representatives
1330 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congresswoman Sewell:

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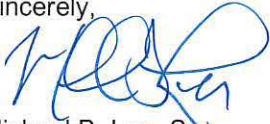
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