

telegraph

VIA EMAIL

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The Honorable Martin J. Oberman
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, DC, 20423

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Dear Chairman Oberman,

Greetings from Chicago and Metra train #801. I write to express my interest in serving on the Board's Passenger Rail Advisory Committee to help improve the use and effectiveness of rail as a means for moving people efficiently and effectively. With a boots-on-ballast background within the rail industry, a strong belief in the role of technology in shaping transportation utilization, and a personal commitment to rail transit, I am excited about the opportunity to contribute to the committee's vital work. I bring a unique and valuable perspective based on my varied career experiences.

My career started with BNSF Railway and Norfolk Southern, where I developed keen insights into the challenges and potential of the rail network, often from the locomotive cab, or with a tie gang. This experience exposed me to the operational complexities of an integrated rail system: from network design and optimization, to strategic planning, and even customer service. While this time instilled in me a profound respect for the industry, it also inspired me to find ways to put the customer first. This is especially critical for a healthy passenger rail network.

Later, at Uber, I immersed myself in the fast-evolving world of technology, witnessing firsthand how innovative solutions can transform traditional industries - and the customer experience - altogether. This experience sharpened my passion for lowering barriers to using sustainable and interconnected transportation solutions. While user-friendliness is easily oversimplified into images of a mobile application, it is more critical to ensure the efficiency of passenger rail routes. Additionally, it is necessary to reduce friction between passenger operators and freight carriers, while also ensuring a high-performance rail network benefits the public in a compounding manner each and every year.

As the CEO of Telegraph, a company working to redefine the way the world works with freight railroads, I continue to see the importance of balancing the interests of rail passengers alongside operators, regulators, and freight carriers. We regularly review, ingest, and standardize service performance data on behalf of rail shippers to review with their railroad carriers. In fact, we have standardized the process in a way that has created on-demand transparency, which facilitates performance conversations in real-time with hard, consistent information. I believe this is helpful to the Board's mission of improving how integrated rail networks can cooperate effectively across the United States. I am especially passionate and informed about this issue, not only because I am a railroader, or because I have built transportation technology for multiple modes, but because I am a regular (weekly) user of intercity and commuter rail. Over the course of 2023, I spent over 100 hours traversing the country via hundreds of trips on Amtrak, Metra, MARTA, TEXRail, SEPTA, CTA, and other regional and intercity operators.

Finally, I humbly submit this letter out of a deep appreciation and sense of responsibility to the citizens of the United States and the rail ecosystem. As a country, we have been gifted an impressive and sizable network of steel rails and wheels. This network, combined with some of the sharpest minds in the world, is a reminder that we have an opportunity and an obligation to improve the offering for the good of the American people. There is no better calling for someone with my experience and passion. Thank you for your consideration.

All the best,
Harris Ligon
CEO, Telegraph

HARRIS C. LIGON

Solutions-Centric Supply Chain and Freight Leader

@ harris.ligon@gmail.com <https://www.linkedin.com/in/ligon/> 📍 Chicago, Illinois



EXPERIENCE

Co-Founder + Chief Executive Officer

Telegraph

📅 07/2020 - Present

- Lead a team of XX to simplify complex workflows and enable collaboration between railroads, shippers, 3PLs, and railcar lessors on a unified platform
- Improve data cleansing and service reporting accuracy for multiple enterprise shipper + Class 1 carrier relationships; drive adoption of new processes to 100% compliance in less than 90 days

Visiting Faculty

The College of William and Mary

📅 08/2017 - Present

- Lead online and executive education courses related to leadership innovation, design thinking, and process & product improvement

General Manager + Strategy & Planning Lead

Uber Freight

📅 04/2019 - 05/2021 📍 Chicago, IL

- Head of North American service expansion incubator; launched Uber Freight Enterprise, Market Access, and Flatbed service lines exceeding \$XXM in revenues
- Led a cross-functional team of operators, developers, and analysts conducting research, go-to-market planning, and implementation for F500 clients
- Led external research with MIT and Northwestern; supported decisioning tools for modal selection involving system dynamics and carbon offsets

Head of Marketplace Solutions + Industrial Sales

Uber Freight

📅 01/2017 - 04/2019 📍 Chicago, Illinois

- Led a business unit of XX cross-functional sellers, analysts, implementers, & operators
- Developed and deployed a first-to-market, automated capacity solution for truckload supply and demand - advanced a thesis from 0 to \$XM in revenue in 4 months
- Streamlined commercial and operational processes which improved market access; actively sold and integrated products + programs into the F2000

Premium Service Group Manager

Norfolk Southern

📅 04/2014 - 01/2017 📍 Norfolk, Virginia

- Led a team of XX; launched a best-in-class service offering for premier intermodal parcel, less-than-truckload, and truckload shippers leveraging new services
- Implemented creative interline & cross-border offerings through direct immersion in Mexico; streamlined customs + interline operating agreements saving +24 hours of transit
- Consistently generated 15% annual volume growth across four different lines of business

Marketing Support Manager

Norfolk Southern

📅 12/2013 - 04/2014 📍 Norfolk, Virginia

- Led a team of XX; improved internal and downstream business processes for marked improvement in overall customer service experience
- Deployed customer feedback system; drove sentiment 40% higher YoY
- Ideated and implemented automated service exception notification system, reduced customer touchpoints by 30% when attempting to discern shipment status

Network Optimization Manager

Norfolk Southern

📅 11/2012 - 12/2013 📍 Norfolk, Virginia

- Led a team of X; reengineered core, extended, and transcontinental rail network; oversaw intermodal and premium network performance 24/7
- Designed seasonal asset and storage solutions to generate incremental revenue from underutilized containers and trailers; reduced excess storage charges by 20%

Intermodal Operations Manager

Norfolk Southern

📅 10/2011 - 11/2012 📍 Multiple Geographies

- Spearheaded initiatives that resulted in a 15% increase in intermodal terminal efficiency, successfully reducing average container dwell times from 48 to 39 hours
- Implemented data-driven strategies to streamline container handling and equipment utilization, improving chassis availability by 90% year-over-year

Transportation Operations + Risk Management

BNSF Railway

📅 06/2008 - 10/2011 📍 Multiple Geographies

EDUCATION

ExecEd: Supply Chains As Strategic Advantages

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

ExecEd: Transportation + Logistics Leadership

Northwestern University

MBA

The College of William & Mary

Certificate: Maritime, Ports & Logistics

Old Dominion University

BA

The Citadel, the Military College of South Carolina

INVOLVEMENT

Accelerating the Journey to Innovation in Rail

Manifest Conference 2024

Freight Rail Keynote

FTR Transportation Conference 2023

Bi-Weekly Contributing Guest

FreightWaves NOW