

ENTERED
Office of Proceedings
February 10, 2022
Part of
Public Record

February 9, 2022

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

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

Dear Ms. Brown:

Schneider National Carriers, Inc., (hereinafter, "Schneider") is located in Green Bay, Wisconsin and relies on the freight rail service provided by CSX Transportation, Inc. I write on behalf of Schneider to express concerns regarding the impact on that freight rail service of Amtrak's proposed Gulf Coast passenger service not only between New Orleans, Louisiana and Mobile, Alabama but potentially across the entire U.S. rail network.

Schneider relies on CSXT for the transport of intermodal containers and trailers. Freight rail service is critical to the success of our business, and CSXT provides us access to major markets across the Eastern half of the U.S. through which we are able to serve our customers. The quality of service CSXT provides makes freight rail the most environmentally efficient transportation alternative to maintain and 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 will cause significant harm to freight service. This harm will manifest itself through decreased freight train speeds and delay as well as the potential for operational variability. Schneider is deeply concerned about our ability to meet the demands of our customers and remain profitable if this harm to CSXT's freight rail service materializes.

Schneider does not oppose Gulf Coast passenger service and expresses no opinion on the merits of that service. However, it is important that the introduction of this passenger service does 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 that Schneider relies on. Schneider urges the Board to seriously consider the merits of these projects.

It is unfair for Amtrak to insist on operating passenger service without regard to the businesses it will share the corridor with. If Amtrak is permitted to commence passenger service without paying its own way, the cost of that service will inevitably fall on the shoulders of shippers. Given the current state of the supply chain, shippers like Schneider may be forced to turn to more expensive and less efficient alternatives to move the high-demand consumer goods that are so critical to the U.S. economy or will wind up subsidizing passenger service through increased rail service costs as CSXT and NSR are pressed to add infrastructure to stem the degradation to freight service.

The Board has an obligation to protect the interests of all parties that rely on the national rail network, not just those of passenger rail. Amtrak's desire for access to the Gulf Coast Corridor with no strings attached is not only harmful to freight rail service, but untenable given the substantial funding it received from Congress last year and threatens the vitality of the entire rail network. Schneider requests that the Board require Amtrak to fund and facilitate the construction of infrastructure projects so as to avoid any harm to freight rail service.

Respectfully submitted,



James Filter
Senior Vice President & General
Manager of Intermodal and Chief
Commercial Officer
Schneider National Carriers, Inc.

cc: FD 36496 Service List
Schneider National Legal Department