

August 18, 2020

The Honorable Roger Wicker  
Chairman  
Committee on Commerce, Science, & Transportation  
512 Dirksen Senate Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Maria Cantwell  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Commerce, Science, & Transportation  
425 Hart Senate Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Deb Fischer  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Transportation and Safety  
512 Dirksen Senate Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tammy Duckworth  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Transportation and Safety  
425 Hart Senate Building  
Washington, DC 20510

***Re: Support for Surface Transportation Board (STB) Nominees, Mr. Robert Primus and Ms. Michelle Schultz***

Dear Chairman Wicker, Ranking Member Cantwell, Subcommittee Chairman Fischer and Ranking Member Duckworth:

The undersigned organizations, whose members broadly represent America's agricultural sector, write to express our strong support for the nominations of Mr. Robert Primus and Ms. Michelle Schultz to be Members of the Surface Transportation Board (STB or Board).

The STB provides critical rail marketplace oversight for shippers and receivers in the food and agricultural sector. An efficient and competitive freight rail system is essential to our sector. Rail consolidation and a lack of competitive rail options gives railroads substantial market power to dictate rail pricing and service levels. The current dynamics of the rail marketplace underscore the need for fair, impartial, and knowledgeable Board Members, who are essential to providing effective oversight. Thoughtful Board Members also are needed to make progress on practical regulatory reforms that improve STB oversight of freight railroads. Continued STB modernization – initiated by Congressional enactment of the *Surface Transportation Board Reauthorization Act of 2015* and pursued under the leadership of STB Chairman Ann Begeman – will help farmers, agribusinesses, and manufacturers be more competitive in the global marketplace.

We believe Mr. Primus and Ms. Schultz have the mental acuity, independence and dedication to serve, and will work well with existing Board members to achieve the Agency's statutory mission and role, which is critical to railroads, rail users, and the American economy. Confirmation of both nominees also would bring the Board to its full complement of five members.

We look forward to working with you in support of the agriculture community and our great nation.

Sincerely,

The Fertilizer Institute  
Agricultural Retailers Association

National Grain and Feed Association  
American Farm Bureau Federation

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American Forest & Paper Association  
Corn Refiners Association  
National Association of Wheat Growers  
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives  
National Oilseed Processors Association  
North American Millers' Association  
Agribusiness Council of Indiana  
California Grain and Feed Association  
Far West Agribusiness Association  
Grain and Feed Association of Illinois  
Kansas Agribusiness Retailers Association  
Michigan Agri-Business Association  
Minnesota Grain and Feed Association  
Montana Grain Growers Association  
Nebraska Grain and Feed Association  
North Dakota Agricultural Association  
Ohio AgriBusiness Association  
PennAg Industries Association  
South Dakota Agri-Business Association  
Texas Grain and Feed Association  
Wisconsin Agri-Business Association  
Wyoming Wheat Marketing Commission

American Sheep Industry Association  
National Aquaculture Association  
National Cattlemen's Beef Association  
National Milk Producers Federation  
North American Renderers Association  
Agribusiness Association of Iowa  
California Association of Wheat Growers  
Colorado Association of Wheat Growers  
Florida Fertilizer & Agrichemical Association  
Illinois Fertilizer & Chemical Association  
Kansas Grain and Feed Association  
Minnesota Crop Production Retailers  
Missouri Agribusiness Association  
Nebraska Agri-Business Association  
New York State Agribusiness Association  
North Dakota Grain Dealers Association  
Pacific Northwest Grain & Feed Association  
Rocky Mountain Agribusiness Association  
South Dakota Grain & Feed Association  
Western Plant Health Association  
Wyoming Ag-Business Association

CC: U.S. Senate