

April 27, 2023

Honorable Maria Cantwell, Chair  
Committee on Commerce, Science and  
Transportation  
United States Senate  
254 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Honorable Ted Cruz, Ranking Member  
Committee on Commerce, Science and  
Transportation  
United States Senate  
512 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Honorable Sam Graves, Chair  
Committee on Transportation and  
Infrastructure  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2165 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Honorable Rick Larsen, Ranking Member  
Committee on Transportation and  
Infrastructure  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2164 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senator Cantwell, Senator Cruz, Representative Graves, and Representative Larsen:

Our members represent major rail customers who are critical to the economy and provide the nation with the products that all Americans depend upon. Ensuring the safest possible rail system is of paramount importance to us and we appreciate your focus on making an already safe rail network even safer.

We live in the communities served by rail and our members' livelihoods are dependent on their products arriving at their destinations safely. We write you today to urge a thorough and targeted approach as you consider rail safety legislation.

Rail is critical to our modern economy, which requires the shipment of thousands of tons of hazardous chemicals across the country every day. These materials are used to meet a wide range of societal needs – from protecting municipal water supplies to domestic manufacturing, agriculture, national defense, and medical processes.

Moving these materials by rail is far safer than other alternatives, with 99.9 percent of hazardous materials reaching their destination without a release caused by a train accident. And despite recent headlines, an already strong safety record on the nationwide rail network continues to improve due to railroads' robust investments in infrastructure and technology, and thanks to a talented and dedicated workforce. In fact, newly released 2022 FRA train accident data indicates the mainline train accident rate is at a national all-time low, as is the hazmat accident rate.

As Congress debates rail safety legislation, we encourage you to focus strictly on policies demonstrated to improve accident prevention and response, and not to include extraneous mandates or other requirements not linked directly to safety, such as a federal train crew size mandate.

Enactment of a federal train crew size mandate would undercut the ability of railroads to innovate, to advance the safety of rail operations, and to compete with other transportation modes, despite a complete lack of data showing such a mandate would improve safety.

Deterring railroads from innovating while favoring trucking automation would have the inevitable result of diverting freight from the rails to highways. Increased diversion of freight to highways will drive up costs for all shippers, exacerbate road and highway congestion, and potentially jeopardize the long-term viability of underutilized rural tracks.

Additionally, Congress should balance the needs of all rail shippers when considering how to treat hazmat. The initial Senate legislation's move to label any train carrying a single hazmat car as a hazmat train – thus triggering a wave of command-and-control rulemakings at the USDOT – is overly broad and would hinder freight movements while increasing costs to shippers.

Freight rail plays a critical role in our economy, and we are going to need railroads to do even more in the coming years. Now is not the time for a government mandate that will stifle adoption of new technologies that would improve rail safety and competitiveness in a rapidly changing supply chain.

Sincerely,

**Alabama**

Montgomery Area Chamber of Commerce

**Arkansas**

Arkansas State Chamber of Commerce  
Forrest City Area Chamber of Commerce  
Little Rock Regional Chamber

**Arizona**

Arizona Mining Association  
Fresh Produce Association of the Americas  
Glendale Chamber of Commerce  
Nogales-Santa Cruz County Chamber of  
Commerce

**California**

Bay Area Council  
California Business Roundtable  
California Chamber of Commerce  
Construction Network  
El Cerrito Chamber of Commerce  
Inland Empire Economic Partnership

Long Beach Area Chamber

Orange County Business Council  
Peninsula Freight Rail Users Group  
Santa Maria Valley Chamber of Commerce  
Seaport Industrial Association  
Yuba-Sutter Economic Development  
Corporation

**Colorado**

Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce

**Connecticut**

Connecticut Business & Industry Association

**Florida**

Associated Industries of Florida  
Florida Chamber of Commerce

**Georgia**

Barrow County Chamber of Commerce  
Georgia Transportation Alliance

**Illinois**

Chicagoland Chamber  
Joliet Region Chamber of Commerce &  
Industry

**Indiana**

Indiana Chamber of Commerce  
Indiana Manufacturers Association

**Kansas**

The Kansas Chamber  
Newton Area Chamber of Commerce  
Overland Park Chamber of Commerce  
Salina Area Chamber of Commerce  
Wichita Regional Chamber of Commerce

**Kentucky**

Kentuckians For Better Transportation

**Massachusetts**

Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce

**Michigan**

Michigan Manufacturers Association  
Michigan Retailers Association

**Minnesota**

Duluth Area Chamber of Commerce  
Iron Mining Association of Minnesota  
Minnesota Soybean Growers Association

**Mississippi**

Hancock Chamber of Commerce  
Greater Jackson Chamber  
Mississippi Economic Council

**Missouri**

Associated Industries of Missouri  
Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce  
Missouri Chamber of Commerce and  
Industry

**Montana**

Montana Chamber of Commerce

Montana Grain Growers Association  
Montana Mining Association  
Treasure Sate Resources Association

**Nebraska**

Columbus Area Chamber of Commerce  
Greater Omaha Chamber  
Kearney Area Chamber of Commerce  
Nebraska Chamber of Commerce & Industry  
North Platte Area Chamber & Development  
Corporation

**Nevada**

Reno + Sparks Chamber of Commerce  
Northern Nevada Development Authority  
The Vegas Chamber

**North Carolina**

North Carolina Chamber of Commerce

**North Dakota**

North Dakota Grain Growers Association  
Greater North Dakota Chamber

**Oklahoma**

Bartlesville Chamber of Commerce  
Edmond Area Chamber of Commerce  
Greater Oklahoma City Chamber  
Oklahoma Agricultural Cooperative Council  
Oklahoma Cotton Council  
Pryor Area Chamber of Commerce  
The State Chamber of Oklahoma  
Tulsa Regional Chamber

**Oregon**

Albany Area Chamber of Commerce  
Albany-Millersburg Economic Development  
Corporation

**South Dakota**

South Dakota Chamber of Commerce &  
Industry

**Tennessee**

Greater Memphis Chamber of Commerce

**Texas**

Brazos Valley Economic Development  
Corporation

Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce

Greater Arlington Chamber of Commerce

Greater Houston Partnership

Laredo Economic Development Corporation

North American Strategy for

Competitiveness, Inc (NASCO)

Port Arthur Chamber of Commerce

The RGV Partnership

Texas Association of Business

Tyler Area Chamber of Commerce

**Utah**

Salt Lake Chamber

**Washington**

Greater Yakima Chamber of Commerce

**Wisconsin**

Wisconsin Agri-Business Association

Wisconsin Corn Growers Association

Wisconsin Soybean Association

**Wyoming**

Wyoming Business Alliance

Wyoming Mining Association

Wyoming Stock Growers Association