

FREIGHT RAIL CUSTOMERS APPLAUD SENATE VOTE ON WHITE HOUSE NOMINEES

WASHINGTON (April 25, 2018) - The Rail Customer Coalition (RCC) welcomes the action taken by the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation to approve the nominations of Patrick Fuchs and Michelle Schultz to serve on the Surface Transportation Board (STB). Currently, there are three vacancies on the Board, which has hampered the STB's ability to address ongoing freight rail issues and advance regulatory reforms.

Earlier this month the Coalition sent a [letter to Chairman Thune and Ranking Member Nelson](#) in support of today's vote. The RCC now urges the full Senate to move quickly and confirm the nominees.

The RCC represents the largest users of freight rail, which is why a fully functioning STB is so important to its members. Coalition members account for more than half of the total volume of cargo shipped by rail and generate more than three quarters of the revenues collected by the railroads. In addition to a fully staffed Board, the Coalition supports practical regulatory reforms that would allow [greater access to competitive freight rail service](#) and that would make the [STB operate more efficiently and effectively](#) for all stakeholders.

The following member organizations issued statements regarding today's vote:

"We applaud Chairman Thune, Ranking Member Nelson and their colleagues on the Committee for their swift action and commitment to getting the Surface Transportation Board back to work on long overdue regulatory reforms. With the chemical industry committing more than \$194 billion in new capital investment in more than 325 new manufacturing projects, the stakes have never been higher for fixing the fundamental problems with our nation's outdated freight rail policies."

- **Cal Dooley, President & CEO of the American Chemistry Council**

"Rail is vital to moving agricultural products across the country so farmers and agribusinesses can meet the demands of a growing domestic and global population. When issues arise between rail companies and shippers it is imperative that the STB is equipped with the proper tools and people to help find solutions, which why the Farm Bureau applauds today's action by the committee."

- **Dale Moore, Vice President of Public Affairs for the American Farm Bureau Federation**

“The paper and wood products industry thanks the committee for its approval and urges the Senate to quickly confirm Patrick Fuchs and Michelle Schultz to the Surface Transportation Board. As one of the largest manufacturing sectors in the nation, we rely on the nation’s rails to move millions of tons of materials to production mills and final markets. Revoking the outdated commodity exemption policy and addressing harmful service failures and higher pricing will help ensure the accessibility of effective, streamlined and competitive rail service to our companies and all rail customers.”

- **Donna Harman, President & CEO of the American Forest & Paper Association**

“Promoting our nation’s energy infrastructure is critical to ensuring that Americans have the energy they demand every day and is a \$1.3 trillion proposition that could support 1 million jobs per year through 2035. With the approval of these nominees, the Surface Transportation Board will be able to advance meaningful regulatory reforms aimed at improving our nation’s rail infrastructure. We thank Chairman Thune and Ranking Member Nelson for their work on making this vote possible and look forward to working with STB’s new members on ensuring that American workers, consumers, and the environment will continue benefitting from our nation’s energy resources.”

- **Jack Gerard, President & CEO of the American Petroleum Institute**

“The Auto Alliance and our members applaud the Senate Commerce Committee for favorably reporting two key nominations that will assist the Surface Transportation Board in addressing a number of key regulatory reforms. Automakers have been especially challenged by rail service declines in recent years. That’s not only a challenge for getting vehicles to customers and dealerships across the country, but rail service declines also add transport and storage costs at off-site locations when inventory exceeds plant capacity. We look forward to working with Patrick Fuchs and Michelle Schultz once they are formally confirmed by the U.S. Senate.”

- **David Schwietert, Executive Vice President, Federal Government Relations & Public Policy of the Auto Alliance**

“The Senate Commerce Committee has taken an important step by advancing the nominations of Patrick and Michelle. The country’s glass container manufacturing industry, along with its supplier partners of raw materials, depend on fair and competitive rail service. A more fully staffed Surface Transportation Board will enable the agency to consider and act on important shipper issues before the agency.”

- **Lynn M. Bragg, President of the Glass Packaging Institute**

“Reliable freight rail is critical to the transportation of valuable scrap commodities around the country. The recycling industry applauds the Committee for taking action to fill the empty positions on the STB, and looks forward to having a full Board in place to address many of the key regulatory issues that are impeding the flow of scrap materials on the rails.”

- **Billy Johnson, Chief Lobbyist of the Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries, Inc**

“Having a fully staffed Surface Transportation Board is long overdue and is an outcome NACD supports to ensure freight rail users’ concerns are heard and addressed. We applaud the White House for nominating two qualified people in Patrick Fuchs and Michelle Schultz, and we’re pleased to see that the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee recognized those qualifications as well in their vote today to approve Patrick and Michelle to the Board. NACD now asks Senate leadership to bring their nominations up for a full vote as quickly as possible.”

- **Eric R. Byer, President of the National Association of Chemical Distributors**

“A fully staffed Surface Transportation Board is vital to the fair and efficient functioning of the U.S. freight rail system and the health of America’s economy. The members of the National Industrial Transportation League thank the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee, and especially Chairman Thune and Ranking Member Nelson, for their timely approval of Patrick Fuchs and Michelle Shultz to serve on the STB, and we look forward to working with the Board to increase access to competitive freight rail service for all shippers.”

- **Jennifer Hedrick, Executive Director, National Industrial Transportation League**

“We applaud Chairman Thune, Ranking Member Nelson and their colleagues on the Committee for their work on addressing the needs of the Surface Transportation Board. Our members produce the feedstock minerals used by the manufacturing sector. Reliable and affordable rail service are vital for our members to be able to compete in the global market and ensure competitive U.S. manufacturing overall.”

- **Mark Ellis, President of the Industrial Minerals Association – North America and National Industrial Sand Association**

“We are pleased and eager to see the expeditious confirmation of the STB nominations, so that the Board can get the full complement of commissioners and really start to focus on the issues at hand.”

- **Private Railcar Food and Beverage Association, Inc.**

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The [Rail Customer Coalition \(RCC\)](#) is a large collection of trade associations representing a broad cross section of manufacturing, agricultural, and energy industries that depend on the railroads to deliver reliable and affordable service in order to remain competitive in a global market. Their members are essential to a healthy U.S. economy with operations and employees throughout the country – collectively they provide more than 7 million jobs and produce more than \$4.8 trillion in economic output.