

June 5, 2017

The Honorable Donald J. Trump  
President of the United States  
The White House  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

The undersigned groups representing agricultural producers and agribusinesses strongly endorse and respectfully urge you to nominate **Patrick Fuchs** to become a member of the federal Surface Transportation Board (STB), and to name current STB Acting Chairman **Ann D. Begeman** as permanent chairman of this important independent federal agency.

America's transportation infrastructure – and the motor carriers, barges and railroads that operate on it – is a critical element of U.S. agriculture's world-class productivity and competitiveness, which contribute substantially to U.S. job creation and economic growth. Farmers, ranchers and agribusinesses depend on these transportation providers to move agricultural products from geographically diverse sources of production to domestic and export markets, as well as to provide critical farm inputs such as fertilizer, seed and agricultural chemicals to producers. Freight railroads account for about 24 percent of agricultural commodity shipment volumes.

The STB serves a vital role, given its charge to provide fair, objective and fact-based regulatory oversight of a freight rail industry that is exempt from U.S. antitrust law and now consists of only seven major Class I railroads – with two dominant in the West and two in the East. The STB has long taken a balanced approach – as it is required to do under existing law – in weighing the need for effective free-market competition in the rail marketplace while allowing railroads to earn sufficient revenues to maintain their infrastructure and a national rail system. Under the STB Reauthorization Act, the STB was expanded to five members (from three previously), providing you the opportunity to name two new persons to serve.

Mr. Fuchs is superbly qualified to serve as a member of the STB. He currently serves as senior professional staff member for surface transportation and merchant marine for the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee. Mr. Fuchs was instrumental in drafting and helping coordinate enactment with Committee Chairman John Thune of the first reauthorization bill since the STB's establishment in 1996 as the successor to the Interstate Commerce Commission. He also represented the Senate on rail and hazardous materials issues during the successful 2015 enactment of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, the five-year, \$305 billion surface transportation bill. He also drafted and successfully negotiated enactment of legislation to avoid a disruption of the nation's freight rail network by setting a new, realistic and achievable deadline for major carriers to install positive train control safety technology.

Mr. Fuchs has impeccable credentials for this key position. He has a keen intellect and a well-earned reputation for integrity, thoroughness, objectivity and impartiality. He also has a passion for freight rail policy, and for bringing facts and well-grounded analysis to bear on regulatory policymaking. Those qualities served him well while previously serving as an analyst and Presidential Management Fellow for rail, maritime and housing issues at the White House Office of Management and Budget. While at OMB, he led government-wide reviews and initiatives that resulted in more than \$5 billion in cost savings through reductions in unnecessary paperwork requirements for truck drivers, amending overly burdensome train regulations and advancing more cost-effective alternatives for crude oil and ethanol transportation safety.

Mr. Fuchs also has served as an economic analyst on foreign service assignments at the U.S. Embassy in The Hague, and in research and analysis positions with the U.S. Government Accountability Office and the National Center for Freight and Infrastructure Research and Education.

In short, we respectfully submit there is not a better or more qualified candidate than Mr. Fuchs for your consideration to become a member of the STB.

We also respectfully urge you to nominate Acting Chairman **Ann D. Begeman** as permanent chairman of the STB. Acting Chairman Begeman possesses the background, experience and leadership essential to the STB as it continues to implement significant changes resulting from its most recent reauthorization in 2015.

Commissioner Begeman was sworn in as a member of the STB in May 2011, bringing with her two decades of extensive experience in transportation policy. She served as a senior aide on Capitol Hill for 21 years, during which she played a key role in crafting major transportation legislation, including the ICC Termination Act that created the STB. Immediately prior to joining the Board, she served as Republican Staff Director for the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee.

During her tenure at the STB, Commissioner Begeman has served with great distinction and dedication. She served as the agency's vice chairman from May 2, 2011 to January 3, 2012; from January 4, 2013 to May 27, 2014; and from January 1, 2015 to January 7, 2016. She is extremely knowledgeable on the complexities and nuances of rail transportation policy. And we have found her to be a person of the highest integrity, consistently fair, open-minded, well-reasoned and insightful in her decisions and rulings as a member of the STB.

We greatly appreciate your consideration of these two outstanding public servants to serve in these important capacities at the STB.

Sincerely,

Agricultural Retailers Association  
Agriculture & Commodities Transportation Coalition  
American Farm Bureau Federation  
Corn Refiners Association

Institute of Shortening and Edible Oils  
National Association of Wheat Growers  
National Cattlemen's Beef Association  
National Corn Growers Association  
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives  
National Grain and Feed Association  
National Milk Producers Federation  
National Oilseed Processors Association  
National Pasta Association  
North American Millers' Association  
Pet Food Institute  
The Fertilizer Institute  
U.S. Poultry and Egg Association

California Grain and Feed Association  
Grain and Feed Association of Illinois  
Kansas Grain and Feed Association  
Michigan Agri-Business Association  
Minnesota Grain and Feed Association  
North Dakota Grain Dealers Association  
Ohio AgriBusiness Association  
Oklahoma Grain and Feed Association  
South Dakota Grain and Feed Association  
Texas Grain and Feed Association  
Wisconsin Agri-Business Association

cc: Honorable Sen. Mitch McConnell, Senate Majority Leader

Honorable Sen. John Thune, Chairman, Senate Committee on Commerce, Science  
and Transportation

Honorable Sen. Deb Fischer, Chairman, Subcommittee on Surface Transportation  
and Merchant Marine Infrastructure, Safety and Security;  
Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation