

November 19, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

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

Dear Majority Leader McConnell and Minority Leader Schumer:

The undersigned organizations, whose members represent America's broad and diverse agricultural sector, thank you and your U.S. Senate colleagues for confirming the nominations of Mr. Robert Primus and Ms. Michelle Schultz to the Surface Transportation Board (STB or Board) on November 18.

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.

Given the impending departure of Chairman Begeman, whose term expires on December 31, 2020, it was particularly important to confirm Mr. Primus and Ms. Schultz to preserve a sufficient number of Board members to enable it to continue functioning efficiently. Both nominees' nominations were recommended by the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation on a bipartisan basis. Both 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.

We again thank you for taking action to confirm these nominees and look forward to working with you in support of the agriculture community and our great nation.

Sincerely,

National Associations:

Agricultural Retailers Association
American Farm Bureau Federation
American Sheep Industry Association
Hardwood Federation
National Association of Wheat Growers

Agriculture Transportation Coalition
American Forest & Paper Association
Corn Refiners Association
National Aquaculture Association
National Cattlemen's Beef Association

National Corn Growers Association
National Grain and Feed Association
National Oilseed Processors Association
North American Millers' Association
The Fertilizer Institute

National Council of Farmer Cooperatives
National Milk Producers Federation
North American Renderers Association
Specialty Soya & Grains Alliance

State and Regional Associations:

Agribusiness Association of Iowa
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 Grain Dealers Association
Ohio AgriBusiness Association
Oklahoma Grain and Feed Association
PennAg Industries Association
South Dakota Agri-Business Association
Texas Ag Industries Association
Western Plant Health Association
Wyoming Ag-Business Association

AgriBusiness Association of Kentucky
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
North Dakota Agricultural Association
Northeast Agribusiness and Feed Alliance
Oklahoma Agribusiness Retailers Association
Pacific Northwest Grain & Feed Association
Rocky Mountain Agribusiness Association
South Dakota Grain & Feed Association
Texas Grain and Feed Association
Wisconsin Agri-Business Association
Wyoming Wheat Marketing Commission

CC: U.S. Senate