



October 15, 2025

The Honorable Patrick Fuchs
Chairman
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20423

The Honorable Michelle Schultz
Vice Chair
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20423

The Honorable Karen Hedlund
Member
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20423

Dear Chairman Fuchs, Vice Chair Schultz, and Member Hedlund:

Re: Comments on the Proposed Merger Between Union Pacific Railroad Company and Norfolk Southern Railway Company (STB Finance Docket No. FD 36873)

Dear Chairman Fuchs and Members of the Surface Transportation Board:

As a food producer and a rail customer, we urge you to reject further consolidation of America's freight rail system. The proposed merger between Union Pacific Railroad (UP) and Norfolk Southern Railway (NS) threatens our nation's agricultural industry, which is uniquely reliant on a competitive nationwide rail network.

Railroads move 1.7 million carloads of food and 1.6 million carloads of grain annually, along with carloads of farm equipment and fertilizer. Railroads play a critical role in national security. Our food supply depends on shipping commodities grown in America's heartland to processing facilities and export terminals often located several states away and traversing more than one rail line along the route.

The significantly increased market power of a combined UP-NS would reduce competition, service and optionality for agricultural shippers. Combined, the railroad would hold more than 40 percent market share, much more than the next closest competitor.

Market Power and Captive Shippers

America's agriculture industry is already facing financial stress and can't afford less competition and an expansion of captive markets on a combined UP-NS. The proposed

merger will eliminate competitive options and distort the market. It's estimated more than 160 BNSF-NS agriculture lanes will be eliminated. With dominant market power, UP-NS can pick winners and losers. This creates a new generation of captive shippers, particularly in rural, agricultural states where rail access is already limited.

With such dominance, UP-NS will be able to operationally control terminals and gateways in the middle of the country. Additionally, it will have a controlling interest over railcar equipment pools like TTX, which has, among other railcars, a fleet of chain tie-down flatcars available for rail customers shipping infrequent heavy machinery like farm implements.

Service Impacts from Integration

History shows that rail mergers cause service disruptions as companies seek to integrate complex technology and operating systems. The ripple effect from the connectivity of the national rail network means disruptions are endured by facilities not directly served by the merging rail companies. For farm country, viable alternatives to shipping by rail are limited and when service problems develop, it is particularly painful on the pocketbook of agriculture.

Long-Term Impact for Rural America

The merger creates expensive and unnecessary risks in the market at the same time we're aggressively pursuing additional value-added agriculture opportunities in rural America. A merged UP-NS would have the market power to negatively impact the much smaller remaining Class I railroads. The competitive harm to the other Class I railroads serving rural America would likely result in higher costs for shippers on those railroads. As railroads consolidated over the last four decades to survive, many communities in rural America lost their economic engine. We respectfully ask that the STB closely examine the proposed merger and exercise its power and obligation to ensure it enhances competition within the rail industry and is in the public interest.

America's agriculture industry is the best in the world in part because we have a robust freight rail network. We urge you to reject this merger so we can keep rural America running with a rail network that preserves competition, service and options for agriculture.

Sincerely,



Mike Greear, CEO
Wyoming Sugar Company
Worland, WY