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ENTERED
Office of Chief Counsel
November 13, 2025
Part of
Public Record

October 15, 2025

Chair Patrick Fuchs
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20423

Re: Proposed Union Pacific-Norfolk Southern Merger - Request for Houston Public Hearing and Comprehensive Impact Analysis

As the State Representative for Texas House District 143 — home to many neighborhoods directly affected by rail operations — I write to urge the Surface Transportation Board (STB) to fully consider Houston’s role and residents’ concerns as part of this merger review.

Houston is not peripheral to this merger; it is central. Our rail network is a vital national link, but local communities already face numerous blocked crossings, delayed emergency response, and neighborhoods divided by long trains that block crossings for hours. This merger’s impacts on Houston demand direct and immediate attention.

I respectfully request the following:

1. **Public Hearing in Houston:** During the Canadian Pacific–Kansas City Southern merger, a weekday hearing in Beaumont limited input from impacted Houstonians. I urge the Surface Transportation Board to hold a hearing in Houston at a more accessible time.
2. **Localized Infrastructure Impact Forecasts:** Communities need detailed, city-specific projections on freight volume, train frequency and length, crossing wait times, and emergency response impacts — not generalized regional analyses.
3. **Full System Impact Study:** The review should assess secondary line interactions, cumulative network impacts, and blockage patterns across Houston’s entire rail system, not just merger-related lines.
4. **Meaningful Public Comment Period:** Cities, community groups, and residents need adequate time to analyze the merger and submit feedback, and local government input should be given meaningful weight.

Freight rail is essential, but federal decisions have daily consequences for local quality of life. Houston must have a voice — not as a footnote, but as the major hub it is — in shaping this historic decision.

Thank you for your consideration. I am available to discuss these concerns and work with the Board to ensure a thorough, equitable review.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ana Hernandez".

Ana Hernandez