

May 13, 2026

The Honorable John Thune
Majority Leader
United States Senate

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Democratic Leader
United States Senate

The Honorable Ted Cruz
Chair, Senate Commerce Committee

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Ranking Member, Senate Commerce
Committee

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Democratic Leader
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Sam Graves
Chairman, House Transportation and
Infrastructure Committee

The Honorable Rick Larsen
Ranking Member, House Transportation
and Infrastructure Committee

Dear Leader Thune, Leader Schumer, Chairman Cruz, Ranking Member Cantwell, Speaker Johnson, Leader Jeffries, Chairman Graves, Ranking Member Larsen, and Members of Congress:

We write to express our continued concerns regarding renewed consideration of transportation proposals that would impose broad, prescriptive changes on the nation's freight rail system. We appreciate Congress's continued focus on rail safety, but we urge lawmakers to ensure any action is carefully tailored, evidence-based, and mindful of the critical role freight rail plays in powering the American economy.

Freight rail remains indispensable to America's energy supply chain and industrial base. This is especially true for coal, which depends on efficient, high-capacity, and reliable rail service to move large volumes to utilities, manufacturers, and export markets. Policies that reduce network flexibility, constrain capacity, or increase operating costs can have significant downstream consequences – including higher energy costs, supply disruptions, and added pressure on domestic producers and consumers alike.

We are concerned that certain proposals under discussion could unintentionally undermine the reliability customers depend on. One-size-fits-all federal mandates related to train operations, staffing models, or other day-to-day operational decisions can reduce efficiency, create bottlenecks, and limit railroads' ability to adapt service to market

conditions, geography, and customer needs. For bulk commodity shippers such as coal producers, dependable rail service is vital, and disruptions can carry serious economic consequences.

As Congress evaluates next steps, particularly as it pursues a surface transportation bill by the September 30th deadline this year, policymaking should remain grounded in facts, data, and demonstrated risk. While service and reliability still have ample room for improvement, rail safety has advanced significantly over time through sustained private investment, continuous operational improvements, and the deployment of new technologies.

We respectfully urge Congress to take a measured approach that protects both safety and the reliability of the nation's freight rail network. Consistent rail service is vital to coal providers, electric utilities, manufacturers, and communities across the country, and reforms should preserve that strength while promoting continued improvement.

On behalf of the undersigned organizations representing hundreds of thousands of American workers and a critical sector of the U.S. economy, we appreciate your consideration and stand ready to work with Congress on policies that advance both safety and economic growth.

Sincerely,

America's Power

National Coal Transportation Association

Power the Future

CC:

The Honorable Sean Duffy, Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation

The Honorable David Fink, Federal Railroad Administration Administrator

The Honorable Patrick Fuchs, Surface Transportation Board Chairman

The Honorable Kevin Hassett, White House National Economic Council Director

The Honorable Vince Haley, White House Domestic Policy Council Director