

November 28, 2022

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Senate Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-221 U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Minority Leader
United States Senate
S-230 U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232 U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
House Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204 U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Majority Leader Schumer, Minority Leader McConnell, Speaker Pelosi, and Minority Leader McCarthy:

We write in concern of the potential for a devastating nationwide rail strike in early December and call on Congress to ensure this worst-case scenario is averted.

A rail stoppage would cost at least \$2 billion per day in lost economic output across the U.S., according to inflation-adjusted damage estimates from the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA). Rail service is critical to all industry—from manufacturing and trade to construction and agriculture. Trains serve business at every stage, from moving the raw materials necessary for production to the finished products ready for consumers or export. It would take almost 470,000 additional long-haul trucks every day to carry the displaced rail freight resulting from a stoppage, a feat that’s not even possible today given driver shortages.

A rail network shutdown of any duration would also lead to plant shutdowns and job losses. An FRA model showed that a two-week, nationwide strike in 1992 would have caused some 570,000 layoffs in rail-served industries—a number that would be higher today given our more robust supply chains.

Take the implications for international trade, to which about half of all rail intermodal volumes are connected. The American Association of Port Authorities said, “a network shutdown of any length would have far-reaching effects.” The Retail Industry Leaders Association similarly wrote that a network disruption would be “devastating” to the businesses that rely on rail.

Such a disruption could also undo much of the progress we’ve made in recovering from a snarled supply chain. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce has warned “any breakdown would be disastrous for U.S. consumers and the economy, and potentially return us to the historic supply chain challenges during the depths of the pandemic.” Consumers, subsequently, would face empty shelves in addition to higher costs.

If the tentative agreements brokered by the Biden Administration are not ratified by rail union membership and Congress fails to intervene, these are the realities our industries and all Americans face going into the holiday season. There would be steep and direct costs, almost immediately, for every American.

Congress has the power to save jobs, prevent shortages, protect consumers, and avert damage to the economy. If a voluntary agreement is not reached before a strike is possible in early December, please step in to ensure the nationwide rail network keeps running.

Sincerely,

Alabama

Alabama Port Authority

Arizona

Arizona Beverage Association
Chandler Chamber of Commerce
Fresh Produce Association of the Americas
Greater Flagstaff Chamber of Commerce

Arkansas

Agricultural Council of Arkansas
Helena Harbor & Phillips County Economic
Development
Mena/Polk County Chamber of Commerce
Port of Little Rock
Wholesale Beer Distributors of Arkansas

California

Bay Area Council
CalAsian Chamber of Commerce
California Black Chamber of Commerce
California Business Properties Association
California Business Roundtable
Dialed-In Partners
FuturePorts
Inland Empire Economic Partnership
Long Beach Area Chamber of Commerce
Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce
Los Angeles County Business Federation
Opportunity Stanislaus
Orange County Business Council
Orange County Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
Peninsula Freight Rail Users Group

Port of Redwood City

San Bernardino Area Chamber of Commerce
San Diego Metropolitan Transit System
San Gabriel Valley Economic Partnership
Santa Cruz Community Development and
Santa Maria Valley Chamber of Commerce
Seaport Industrial Association
Infrastructure

Colorado

Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce

Connecticut

Connecticut Business and Industry Association
The Connecticut Construction Industries
Association, Inc.
Connecticut Retail Merchants Association

District of Columbia

Railway Supply Institute

Florida

Associated Industries of Florida
Florida Feed Association
Florida Trucking Association
Haines City Economic Development, Inc.
Port Tampa Bay
Railway Systems Suppliers, Inc.

Georgia

Georgia Beverage Association
Greater Macon Chamber of Commerce
Southeastern Lumber Manufacturers Association

Illinois

Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce
Grain and Feed Association of Illinois
Illinois Chamber of Commerce
Illinois Corn Growers Association

Indiana

The Regional Chamber of Northeast Indiana, Inc.

Kansas

Coffeyville Area Chamber of Commerce
Kansas Agribusiness Retailers Association
The Kansas Chamber
Kansas Grain Sorghum Association
Kansas Grain and Feed Association
Kansas Livestock Association
Overland Park Chamber of Commerce
Parsons Chamber of Commerce
Renew Kansas Biofuels Association
Salina Area Chamber of Commerce

Kentucky

Kentuckians for Better Transportation
Kentucky Chamber of Commerce

Louisiana

The Chamber Southwest Louisiana
Louisiana Ag Industries Association
Louisiana Association of Business and Industry
Louisiana Food Processors Association
Louisiana Forestry Association
Louisiana Loggers Association
Louisiana Retailers Association

Maryland

Maryland Chamber of Commerce
Maryland Motor Truck Association

Massachusetts

Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce

Michigan

Michigan Agri-Business Association
Michigan Chamber of Commerce

Michigan Chemistry Council
Michigan Farm Bureau
Michigan Retailers Association

Minnesota

Duluth Area Chamber of Commerce
Minnesota Corn Growers Association
Northwestern Lumber Association

Mississippi

Greater Jackson Chamber
Mississippi Lumber Manufacturers Association
Railway Tie Association

Missouri

Associated Industries of Missouri
Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce
Kansas City SmartPort
Kirkwood Des-Peres Area Chamber of Commerce
Lee's Summit Economic Development Council
Mid-America Lumbermens Association
Missouri Beverage Association
Missouri Forest Products Association
Missouri Soybeans
Moberly Area Economic Development
Corporation
North American Equipment Dealers Association
Southeast Missouri Regional Port Authority and
SEMO Port Railroad

Montana

Montana Chamber of Commerce
Montana Grain Growers Association

Nebraska

Associated Beverage Distributors of Nebraska
Nebraska Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Nebraska Grocery Industry Association
Nebraska Pork Producers Association
North Platte Area Chamber and Development
Corporation

Nevada

The Reno + Sparks Chamber of Commerce
Southwest Central Regional Economic
Development Authority
White Pine Chamber of Commerce

New Jersey

Newark Regional Business Partnership
New Jersey Motor Truck Association
New Jersey Retail Merchants Association

New York

The Business Council of New York State, Inc.
Orange County Partnership

North Carolina

Building Material Suppliers Association – North
Carolina
Corn Growers Association of North Carolina
NC Chamber

Ohio

Appalachian Partnership for Economic Growth
Building Material Suppliers Association – Ohio
Mercer County Economic Development
Ohio Chamber of Commerce
Stark Economic Development Board

Oklahoma

Claremore Industrial and Economic Development
Authority
Greater Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce
Oklahoma Agribusiness Retailers Association
Oklahoma Cotton Council
Oklahoma Grain and Feed Association
Oklahoma Manufacturing Alliance
Oklahoma Sorghum Association
Oklahoma Wheat Growers Association
State Chamber of Oklahoma
Tulsa Regional Chamber

Pennsylvania

Franklin County Area Development Corporation
Pennsylvania Manufacturers' Association

Pennsylvania Retailers' Association

South Carolina

Building Material Suppliers Association – South
Carolina
South Carolina Trucking Association

South Dakota

South Dakota Chamber of Commerce and
Industry

Tennessee

Building Material Suppliers Association –
Tennessee
Greater Memphis Chamber
Tennessee Chamber of Commerce & Industry

Texas

Abilene Regional Growth Alliance
Amarillo Chamber of Commerce
Amarillo Economic Development Corporation
Association of Rural Communities in Texas
The Borderplex Alliance
Fort Bend Chamber of Commerce
Fort Bend Economic Development Council
Laredo Economic Development Corporation
Longview Chamber
Lubbock Chamber of Commerce
North Texas Commission
Odessa Chamber of Commerce
Texas Ag Industries Association
Texas Agriculture Cooperative Council
Texas Association of Business
Texas Association of Manufacturers
Texas Beverage Association
Texas Corn Producers Association
Texas Food and Fuel Association
Texas Forestry Association
Texas Grain and Feed Association
Texas Independent Ginners Association
Texas International Produce Association
Texas Ports Association
Texas Poultry Federation
Texas Soybean Association

Texas Trucking Association

West Virginia Chamber of Commerce

Virginia

Building Material Suppliers Association - Virginia
Central Fairfax Chamber of Commerce
Hampton Roads Chamber
Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce
Port of Virginia
Virginia Chamber of Commerce

Wisconsin

Midwest Food Products Association
Wisconsin Agri-Business Association
Wisconsin Corn Growers Association
Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce
Wisconsin Soybean Association

Washington

Greater Yakima Chamber of Commerce
Thurston County Chamber of Commerce

Wyoming

Wyoming Business Alliance
Wyoming County Commissioners Association
Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation
Wyoming Mining Association
Wyoming Stock Growers Association

West Virginia

Building Material Suppliers Association – West
Virginia

CC: Members of the U.S. House and U.S. Senate