

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1804

May 30, 2014

The Honorable John Rockefeller
Chairman
Senate Committee on Commerce,
Science and Transportation
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Thune
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Commerce, Science
and Transportation
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senators Rockefeller and Thune:

I am writing to you on behalf of a broad array of Louisiana businesses and industries including manufacturing, agriculture and energy companies, many that represent some of the largest customers of freight rail service. Louisiana businesses depend on safe, reliable, and cost-effective rail transportation to deliver products that are essential to consumers and serve as the foundation of the U.S. economy. I believe it is time to review key aspects of rail policy to ensure that the U.S. is on course to meet the growing needs of rail shippers, carriers and the public.

I know that we are all pleased to see the renaissance in American industry that is bringing investment and jobs back to our country. In order to fully realize the benefits of this much needed boost to our economy, we must be sure that there are freight rail policies in place to help us maximize on these growth opportunities.

My constituents continue to face many challenges with both freight rates and service. Shippers in Louisiana, like many shippers elsewhere, lack access to competitive rail service. Additionally, railroad rates have surged over the last decade, rising nearly three times as fast as inflation and trucking rates. A shipper who lacks competitive service has little recourse in the face of skyrocketing rates. Challenging a rate before the Surface Transportation Board (STB) is time consuming, expensive and it is especially burdensome to small businesses.

As the Commerce Committee develops key provisions for the surface transportation reauthorization bill, I urge you to move forward with much needed freight rail policy reforms. I encourage you to adopt policies to promote greater competition between railroads and to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the STB. Increasing competition among railroads would help ensure that Louisiana products can be shipped efficiently to both domestic and international markets.

I look forward to working with you to advance our common goals in ensuring rail policy is updated and balanced to ensure future growth and prosperity.

With kindest regards, I am

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mary L. Landrieu". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mary" being the most prominent part.

Mary L. Landrieu
United States Senator