

November 11, 2025

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

Consumer Support for Union Pacific-Norfolk Southern Merger

Dear Chairman Fuchs,

As an organization that advocates for policies that expand choice and affordability for American consumers, we at the Consumer Choice Center write this letter to express our support for the proposed merger between Union Pacific (UP) and Norfolk Southern (NS) that will be determined by your agency.

The **Consumer Choice Center** is an independent, non-partisan consumer advocacy group championing the benefits of freedom of choice, innovation, and abundance in everyday life. We champion smart policies that are fit for growth, promote lifestyle choice, and defend technological innovation.¹

As our own research on transportation policy has demonstrated, for consumers to benefit from a competitive environment with lower prices and fewer regulatory roadblocks, the Surface Transportation Board must reimagine rail policy to also consider the end effects to consumers and the need for investment.²

The Board should foster a competitive environment that engenders more innovation, elicits investment, and expands choice for companies shipping products and the consumers that receive them.

The merger before your agency represents a significant opportunity for more affordable and efficient delivery of goods to benefit manufacturers and the consumers that rely on them. The ability to combine the scale of both private rail firms on opposing coasts will bring dividends that will be passed onto consumers in the form of lower prices for shippers and manufacturers.

Mergers and acquisitions are market-driven agreements that hope to reduce transaction costs and create more value for shareholders, stakeholders, and customers. In this circumstance, the proposed merger would be a net positive to consumer welfare and the broader transportation market, and we believe it passes the test the STB is to consider.

¹ Consumer Choice Center. <https://consumerchoicecenter.org/>.

² <https://consumerchoicecenter.org/consumer-case-for-reimagining-and-innovating-railroad-policy/>

In combining the country's two biggest rail networks, this unified system will streamline shipping and lower logistical costs, translating into a more affordable consumer experience all along the supply chain. This merger will bring real benefits to households and small businesses. It will improve service by linking two disparate rail systems, create more employment opportunities, help improve safety considerations, and bring untold benefits to consumers.

The unification of UP and NS will not only benefit America's consumers through lower costs and faster shipping but have a second-order effect of reducing highway congestion and infrastructure taxes, often footed or passed on to consumers. According to the [Texas A&M Transportation Institute](#), American commuters lost an average of 63 hours in traffic in 2024, the highest level ever recorded. This loss represents a cost of \$269 billion per year, underscoring the need to provide affordable alternatives for shippers and logistics companies normally reliant on heavy trucking and other last-mile options.

The unification of UP and NS presents an opportunity to allow more goods to be transported across the country by rail, increasing competition in the transportation sector that will benefit all firms seeking to get their goods to market, as well as the consumers that expect to buy those goods at better prices.

For even more competitive benefits, the STB should work with like minds in Congress to amend the common carrier obligation and restore the STB's remit as a remedial agency, focused on resolving disputes and promoting a competitive environment rather than creating its own policies.

As such, the Consumer Choice Center urges the Surface Transportation Board to approve the merger between UP and NS and help foster a more efficient and competitive freight rail sector in the United States. Doing so will promote a more innovative and cost-effective freight system that benefits all consumers for years to come.

Thank you for your attention to this matter,

Yaël Ossowski
Deputy Director
Consumer Choice Center

David Clement
North American Affairs Manager
Consumer Choice Center