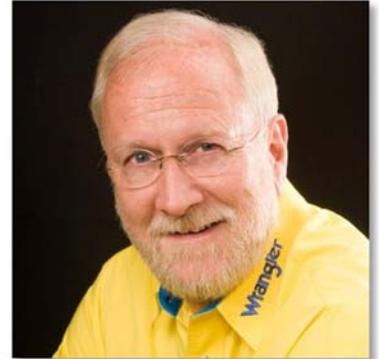


TRANSPORTATION REPORT AND NEWS FLASH

From: Terry Whiteside

Date: June 19, 2015



**S 808 - A BILL TO ESTABLISH THE SURFACE
TRANSPORTATION BOARD AS AN INDEPENDENT
ESTABLISHMENT, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES PASSES
SENATE ON JUNE 18TH – A TRULY RED LETTER DAY**

**AFTER 10 YEARS OF WORKING TO DEVELOP CAPTIVE RAIL
COALITIONS, THE SENATE PASSES AN HISTORIC SURFACE
TRANSPORTATION BILL REAUTHORIZING ACT OF 2015 BY UNANIMOUS
CONSENT**

**RAIL SHIPPERS, FARM PRODUCERS AND MEMBERS OF
AGRICULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS APPLAUD SENATE PASSAGE OF
LEGISLATION TO REFORM FREIGHT RAIL POLICIES**

The U.S. Senate late yesterday (June 18, 2015) approved [S. 808, the “Surface Transportation Board Reauthorization Act of 2015.”](#) today by unanimous consent.

The Alliance for Rail Competition together with its many members and shipper coalitions, have been working for over 10 years to bring needed reforms to the STB.

Terry Whiteside, ARC's Chairman issued a statement on this passage. "The Alliance for Rail Competition has worked tirelessly for many years to bring modernization of rail policy to the STB. ARC has concentrated for many years on building rail customers coalitions. It has continued, for many years, to bring together members of the utilities, sand and glass, agriculture, and manufacturing heading up and participating in rail customer coalitions, such as [Rail Customer Coalition](#). It's focus has been to build a stronger federal regulatory structure and address the needs of rail shippers nationwide especially those who do not have access to rail-to-rail competition. ARC recognizes the work of their Washington Representatives Meyers and Associates for their enduring work on providing education and factual predicate in the lead up to the Senate passage of S-808.

The American Chemistry Council President and CEO Cal Dooley also issued the following statement regarding the Senate's passage of this significant legislation:

"Over the past few years, a growing number of policymakers have learned what so many manufacturers, farmers and energy producers know all too well: the Surface Transportation Board (STB) and the nation's freight rail polices are in desperate need of modernization. The STB has not been reauthorized since it was created in 1995, and it's clear that the Board could benefit from an update to better equip it to handle today's challenges.

“Chairman Thune and Ranking Member Nelson have demonstrated strong leadership by listening to the concerns of freight rail customers and by crafting a sensible bill that will improve how the STB addresses freight rail issues. Today’s broad bipartisan approval of their proposal marks another important step forward to help address long-standing rate and service issues.

“In addition to winning the support of the full Senate, the legislation has the support of almost 50 trade associations as part of the [Rail Customer Coalition](#), which represents the largest users of freight rail.

“We urge the House to join their colleagues in the Senate and to listen to farmers, manufacturers and energy producers in districts across the country by supporting the reasonable changes proposed in this legislation, which will help foster a strong freight rail system and will benefit railroads, shippers and the U.S. economy.”

This bill would enact a series of [meaningful reforms](#), including streamlining the STB’s overly burdensome rate review process, providing reasonable arbitration procedures to resolve rate disputes, and allowing the STB to be more proactive in resolving freight rail issues.

Furthermore, in light of the recent service breakdowns impacting rail customers nationwide, this legislation also emphasizes the existing responsibility of the railroad industry to dedicate revenue appropriately to meet current and future service needs.

The reforms in the bill would also address some of the underlying issues that were identified in a recent [report](#) by the National Academies’ Transportation

Research Board and would tackle some of the concerns voiced by STB commissioners about the Board's outdated policies and broken process.