

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4805

March 29, 2022

The Honorable Martin J. Oberman  
Chairman  
Surface Transportation Board  
395 E Street Southwest  
Washington, DC 20423

The Honorable Robert E. Primus  
Board Member  
Surface Transportation Board  
395 E Street Southwest  
Washington, DC 20423

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

The Honorable Karen J. Hedlund  
Board Member  
Surface Transportation Board  
395 E Street Southwest  
Washington, DC 20423

The Honorable Michelle A. Schultz  
Board Member  
Surface Transportation Board  
395 E Street Southwest  
Washington, DC 20423

Dear Chairman Oberman, Member Fuchs, Member Schultz, Member Primus, and Member Hedlund,

Our nation depends on a healthy railroad network to move goods safely and efficiently. The current congestion at our nation's terminals has limited the ability to load and store containers resulting in limited rail capacity. As the Surface Transportation Board (STB) oversees our nation's railroad network and looks to help mitigate the congestion problems across the intermodal supply chain, I encourage STB to examine the current rail capacity.

On March 3, 2022, the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee held a hearing with the Federal Maritime Commission (FMC) examining the current and on-going supply chain crisis. Since the crisis has stalled goods across the supply chain, importers have incurred increasing charges on the use of containers while exporters have struggled to find containers available. The congestion of freight movement has impacted my home state of West Virginia in shipping coal. As a result, the railcar shortages have resulted in shipment cancelations or delays.

The COVID-19 pandemic, employment shortages, port congestion, and record high inflation have all impacted railroad operators resulting in lower freight volumes. However, coal production in West Virginia has increased over ten percent compared to last year and the price for coal has reached a record high. The dire shortage of railcars will impact the United States' ability to provide steam coal to Europe for electricity generation and met coal for steel production.

As the nation continues to navigate the persistent problems throughout the supply chain, I encourage the STB to review the railcar shortage and its impact on shipments. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Shelley Moore Capito". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent dot over the 'i' in "Capito".

Shelley Moore Capito  
United States Senator