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PAUL D. TONKO

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
20TH DISTRICT, NEW YORK

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE

CHAIR, SUBCOMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT
AND CLIMATE CHANGE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ENERGY

SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS

COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS, FORESTS,
AND PUBLIC LANDS

COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE,
AND TECHNOLOGY

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT

SUBCOMMITTEE ON RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY

May 9, 2022

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

Dear Chairman Oberman and Members of the Surface Transportation Board:

I write regarding the pending acquisition by CSX of railroads owned by Pan Am Railways, Inc. in my district in New York's Capital Region. Several matters of concern have been brought to my attention by my constituents related to this pending acquisition. Should the Surface Transportation Board approve this acquisition, I respectfully request that it does so on the conditions that CSX ensures that trains are not parked or left idling behind residential homes in Mechanicville and Stillwater, New York, and that there is a formal agreement between the Village of Altamont, New York, and CSX regarding the timing of extended train schedules to ensure that the Village can coordinate the timely delivery of emergency services.

Numerous reports from my constituents have made clear that Pan Am has parked trains containing garbage within 100 feet of residential homes and left trains idling for extended periods of time, resulting in noise pollution reaching up to 95 decibels and very pungent smells.^{1,2} These conditions have continued to impact the daily lives of numerous residents for years and must not be tolerated. Following extensive outreach from myself, town officials, and community members, Pan Am made improvements to their internal roadways and temporarily stopped parking trains in residential areas.³ While this progress is appreciated, should the pending acquisition be approved, it is critical that CSX remain responsive to the needs of the communities in which it operates.

¹ <https://www.timesunion.com/news/article/stillwater-trains-pollution-16938301.php>

² <http://sdcdpw.org/the-problem-of-the-noisy-and-smelly-train-in-stillwater-seems-solved/>

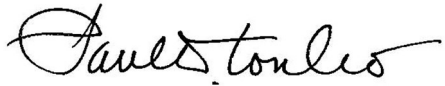
³ <https://www.news10.com/top-stories/loud-smelly-train-issue-in-stillwater-appears-resolved/>

Additionally, there have been concerns brought to my attention by the Village of Altamont regarding the delivery of emergency services in the Village, the town of Guilderland and the town of Knox due to the anticipated utilization of extended trains on the tracks running through the Village following the merger⁴. As the Village does not have an alternative route, the passing through of these extended trains could lead to a 10-minute traffic delay, preventing emergency service vehicles from promptly responding to calls for thousands of constituents across three towns. In the interest of the health and well-being of area residents, I request that any acquisition agreement include transparency about train schedules and cooperation with the Village to ensure that it can effectively deliver emergency services at all times.

I respectfully request that the Surface Transportation Board approve the acquisition only on these conditions and request that the Board provide an update on the status of the acquisition at its earliest convenience. Your consideration, consistent with all laws, rules, agency policy and procedure, is appreciated.

Thank you, and I look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Paul D. Tonko". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "P" and a long, sweeping underline.

Paul D. Tonko
Member of Congress

⁴ <https://altamontenterprise.com/01212022/altamont-asks-federal-board-reject-rail-deal>