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## DeLay doesn't want rail built

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By: [MARK EVANGELISTA](#) , Citizen Staff

Tom DeLay got off the fence on San Jacinto Rail, not in favor or against the 12.8-mile track from Bayport to Clear Lake, but said that he didn't want it constructed.

"I don't want to see that rail built," the House majority leader said in an Aug. 24 interview with The Citizen editorial staff.

"Our shippers of chemicals are being held hostage to a monopoly," DeLay said.

Union Pacific, which owns the tracks, is the monopoly that needs to be broken up and face competition for rail service with the Port of Houston, said DeLay.

Ports like New Orleans and on the West Coast have multiple railroads but the Port of Houston only has one. Burlington Northern-Santa Fe has some tracks in Houston but none with the Port.

"That means higher rates of transportation," said DeLay. "That puts on added pressure, driving competition out of this country. That affects the local economy, jobs and that's because of the lack of competition in transportation. We need to open up that service to competition."

DeLay has been trying to work with local officials such as the Port of Houston Authority commissioners and Mayor Bill White for solutions. He said that he's been trying to broker a sit-down with the two railroads but to no avail.

"I've been trying to look at ways to use leverage to get Union Pacific to negotiate with BNSF but for what ever reason that when people are adamantly opposed to what BNSF is proposing that they don't have to negotiate," he said.

The contract between the Port and Union Pacific seems to be the main stumbling block, said DeLay.

"That contract is the biggest problem," he said.

"On a federal level, we're looking at legislation. We can look at ways of facilitating solutions that other people are working on."

Mobility concerns for railroads could be addressed through the City of Houston and also the Greater Houston-Galveston Area Council. Rail service is blocked to the east because of the Houston Ship Channel, the Port of Houston and Galveston Bay, DeLay said.

"There's no reason why we can't come up with solutions (like bridges or tunnels) from the west and move east," he said.

Opening the right of way to competition would be the preferred option for BNSF, DeLay said. "Rightfully so, you can say that (BNSF) will have difficulty building this line but they'll tell you that they don't want to build the line. They'd just as soon use existing rail."