



Supporting Organizations

Alliant Energy
American Chemistry
Basin Electric Power Cooperative
Bemidji Area Forestry Affairs Council
Blandin Paper Company
Dairyland Power Cooperative
East River Electric Power Cooperative
Freeborn-Mower Cooperative Services
Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce
Great River Energy
Hibbing Area Chamber of Commerce
Lyon-Lincoln Electric Co-op
MN Association of Cooperatives
McNeilus Steel
Midwest Shippers' Association
Minnesota Crop Production Retailers
Minnesota Farmers Union
Minnesota Grain and Feed Association
Minnesota Forest Industries
Minnesota Power
Minnesota Rural Electric Association
Minnesota Soybean Growers Association
Minnesota Valley REC
Minnesota Municipal Utilities Association
Ottertail Power Company
People's Cooperative Services
Renville-Sibley Co-op
Tri-County Electric Cooperative

October 2, 2008

The Honorable John Kline
1429 Longworth House Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Kline:

On behalf of Gopher Consumers United for Rail Equity (CURE), thank you for co-sponsoring H.R. 1650, the Railroad Anti-trust Enforcement Act. We greatly appreciate your support. Your endorsement of H.R. 1650 will help to end the monopolistic practices of the four major class I railroads who control 95% of the nation's rail traffic and who are exempt from the nation's anti-trust laws.

Building on your endorsement of H.R. 1650, we also respectfully request that you sponsor its companion legislation, H.R. 2125, the Rail Competition and Service Improvement Act. Access to full rail customer rights will not be possible until both H.R. 1650 and H.R. 2125 are implemented into law. H.R. 2125 was introduced to reform the Surface Transportation Board (STB). This important legislation would make the STB accountable to shippers and ensure that captive shippers are treated fairly. The legislation imposes rate standards adopted by other regulatory bodies and allows captive shippers' access to competing railroads.

Many businesses in Minnesota depend on rail shipment of goods such as coal, fertilizer, and grain. As you can see from the diverse members of our coalition listed on our letterhead, this issue affects a very broad cross section of Minnesota's industries. These industries are railroad customers, including shippers of important products Americans use and rely upon every day, from food to forest products, chemicals, and electricity. Yet none of these industries enjoy the same sort of broad antitrust exemptions as the railroads. Without access to competition for freight delivery, we have become captive shippers to certain railroads and experience crippling cost increases and jeopardized service. This situation threatens the vitality of our economy.

Minnesotans are being hard hit by the increased costs experienced by captive rail shippers. Our state's farmers are typically members of the rural electric co-ops that are experiencing much higher rates due to the railroads increasing the cost of coal transportation. Consumers in turn are being forced to cover these increased costs. The Consumer Federation of America estimates the "cost of captivity" at \$300 annually for every family in the United States.

Thanks again for your support. We look forward to working with you in the future.

Sincerely,

Amy Fredregill
Gopher CURE Chair