



## September 2008

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"Rural America is getting fleeced by the railroads, one shipment at a time."

*CURE Chairman Glenn English, in [Traffic World](#). "Aq Groups Push Antitrust Legislation," Aug. 22, 2008*

## Agriculture Coalition Joins Call For Rail Reform

Diverse interests within the U.S. agriculture sector including the American Farm Bureau Federation and the National Farmers Union have agreed to join forces to stop the railroads' monopoly stranglehold on rural America.

The coalition has come together to support passage of the Railroad Antitrust Enforcement Act - H.R. 1650 in the House and S. 772 in the Senate.

The agriculture and rural groups are concerned about the railroads' hidden tax on products shipped by rail. The hidden tax hits farmers and rural America especially hard, because of their reliance on freight goods.

"Rural America is getting fleeced by the railroads, one shipment at a time," said Glenn English, CURE Chairman and CEO of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. "Rural areas are more likely to be served by only one railroad, and railroads use that unrestrained market power to drive up prices with overcharges on everything from grain shipments for food and fuel to coal for electricity."

The American Farm Bureau Federation and the National Farmers Union represent hundreds of thousands of rural agriculture producers in more than 30 states. Also weighing in with their support of rail reform legislation are the American Coalition for Ethanol, as well as the Alliance for Rural America, a broad 13-member coalition whose member organizations include the American Corn Growers Association, the National Farmers Organization, and the American Agriculture Movement.

"America's farmers and ranchers deserve a fair, competitive and transparent rail system," said National Farmers Union President Tom Buis. "The rail industry's increased consolidation has resulted in a lack of competitive services and higher transportation costs. Congress needs to act this year to resolve these issues."

American Farm Bureau President Bob Stallman also called for Congress to pass the Railroad Antitrust Enforcement Act before it completes its work this year.

"American agriculture depends on the railroad system, and agricultural producers are frequently captive rail customers and experience both unreliable service and exorbitantly high rates from the railroads," Stallman said. "Freight railroads must be subject to our nation's antitrust laws so that prices for shipping agriculture commodities via rail can be fair and reasonable."

The Railroad Antitrust Enforcement Act has passed both the House and Senate Judiciary Committees by bipartisan voice votes. The legislation awaits action by full House and Senate.

### **These organizations focused on agriculture and rural issues support rail reform legislation:**

- National Farmers Union
- American Farm Bureau Federation
- National Rural Electric Cooperative Association
- American Coalition for Ethanol
- Alliance for Rural America, whose member organizations include:
  - American Corn Growers Association
  - National Farmers Organization
  - American Agriculture Movement
  - Women Involved in Farm Economics
  - Federation of Southern Cooperatives
  - National Assn. of Farmer Elected Committees
  - The National Grange
  - Kansas Farmers Union
  - Ohio Farmers Union
  - Oklahoma Farmers Union
  - Pennsylvania Farmers Union
  - Rocky Mountain Farmers Union
  - Texas Farmers Union

## **Rail Creates 'Go21' Front Group to Fight Consumer Protection**

The rail lobby has resorted to creating a front group called Go21 that is working to generate the illusion of opposition to CURE's consumer protection legislation, in an apparent intentional effort to mislead U.S. consumers.

An e-mail letter from the group currently showing up in Americans' in-boxes uses scare tactics and deceptive language to make the casual reader believe he or she is signing a petition to ease traffic congestion.

In fact, exactly the opposite is true. The Go21 petition seeks to stop the two most important efforts for consumer oriented rail reform - the Railroad Antitrust Enforcement Act and the Railroad Competition and Service Improvement Act. In addition, the petition supports federal tax breaks for an industry that is reporting record quarterly profits.

The petition is meant to obscure the railroads' power to overcharge for freight shipping, adding a surcharge to virtually everything Americans buy - from the cars we drive to the electricity we use to the food we eat.

"Even for the rail industry, this is sinking to a new low," said CURE Executive Director Bob Szabo. "If the railroads really believe that Americans will benefit from continued monopoly pricing power and poor service, then they should say that and let the people decide. Tactics like this have no place in serious policy discussions."

### **Spread the Word**

The more people who unwittingly sign this bogus petition, the greater the chance the rail industry will be able to sidetrack consumer protections and reap the continued benefits of their monopoly power.

**[Click here](#)** to learn the truth about the claims being made by this railroad front group.

**[Click here](#)** to learn why it's important to support the Railroad Antitrust Enforcement Act, H.R. 1650/S. 772.

**[Click here](#)** to learn why it's important to support the Railroad Competition and Service Improvement Act, H.R. 2125/S. 953.

## **Crisson Joins CURE Executive Committee**



**Mark Crisson**

Mark Crisson, President and CEO of the American Public Power Association, has been elected to the CURE Executive Committee.

"APPA has been with us every step of the way in getting rail reform legislation closer than it's ever been to becoming a reality," said CURE Executive Director Bob Szabo. "We are excited that our Executive Committee will have the benefit of Mark's strategic counsel and leadership ability as we work to protect consumers from railroad monopoly abuse."

Prior to becoming President and CEO of APPA, Mark Crisson was the director of Tacoma, Wash., Public Utilities, a position he held since 1993. In 2003, Crisson chaired the APPA Board of Directors, completing an eight-year term on the board. In 2005, he received APPA's Alex Radin Distinguished Service Award for exceptional dedication and leadership in public power.