



NATIONAL STONE, SAND
& GRAVEL ASSOCIATION

June 12, 2023

The Honorable J.D. Vance
U.S. Senator
288 Russell Senate Office Building

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
U.S. Senator
511 Hart Senate Office Building

Dear Senator Vance & Senator Cantwell,

On behalf of the 450 members of the National Stone, Sand & Gravel Association (NSSGA), we praise your leadership on advancing legislation that increases the safety on our railways, one of the most crucial industries in America. NSSGA is encouraged by the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation's work to approve S. 576, the Railway Safety Act, and hopes that the Committee will continue to discuss and consider innovative solutions to help aid this vital part of our nation's infrastructure. Ensuring the safety and efficiency of railway infrastructure is crucial for the transportation and delivery of our members' products to markets and construction projects.

NSSGA represents the aggregates and industrial sand industries of our country, with over 9,000 facilities and more than 100,000 employees in high-paying jobs. The aggregates industry produces 2.5 billion tons of aggregates annually, which are crucial in sustaining our lifestyle and constructing our nation's infrastructure and communities. The products sourced by this industry are fundamental components required for building roads, airports, transit, rail, ports, clean water, and energy networks.

Poor rail service is impacting our industries at an alarming rate. Declining rail service hinders our members' ability to supply millions of tons of aggregates and industrial sand, which are essential resources utilized to upgrade outdated infrastructure, construct resilient communities, and support America's energy production. Aggregates producers rely on 1.1 million railcars to efficiently transport materials from quarries and plants to expanding communities and infrastructure projects. In the event of rail service suspension or delays, the ability to supplement these materials in these markets becomes extremely challenging, if not impossible.

Last year, NSSGA provided comprehensive feedback to the Surface Transportation Board (STB), expressing how service disruptions and unjustifiable price hikes are significantly detrimental to our industry. NSSGA's industrial sand companies rely on freight rail to ship more than 30 percent of industrial sand produced in the U.S., and in the case of some industrial sand companies, 80 percent of finished product is transported via freight rail. This is particularly significant in the U.S. oil and gas



industry, which requires industrial sand as a proppant to produce oil and gas from shale, and where freight rail plays a role in transporting sand to the oil and gas production areas. Without intervention to enhance service, ongoing delays and the inability to transport products to the market will persist, directly impeding the supply of crucial infrastructure projects nationwide, such as the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and other future infrastructure and energy investments approved by Congress.

S. 576 makes common sense changes to improve the safety and efficiency of rail service. As the full Senate works to advance this bill, we ask that consideration be given to our industry to ensure better movement of critical construction materials and industrial sand to markets. Further, we ask that any additional revisions to service standards, especially “manifest” service, do not have any unintended impacts to aggregates and industrial sand cars.

We look forward to continuing to work with all Senators to find solutions that seek to improve deteriorating rail service ensuring construction projects and energy production can continue to thrive.

If our office can assist in this endeavor in anyway, please reach out anytime.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Johnson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Michael W. Johnson
President and CEO
National Stone, Sand & Gravel Association

