



NATIONAL STONE, SAND  
& GRAVEL ASSOCIATION

July 12, 2023

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin  
United States Senator  
141 Hart Senate Office Building

The Honorable Roger Marshall  
United States Senator  
479A Russell Senate Office Building

Dear Senator Baldwin and Senator Marshall,

On behalf of the 450 members of the National Stone, Sand & Gravel Association (NSSGA), I am writing to express our strong support for the Reliable Rail Service Act. NSSGA praises you for your leadership in seeking to find solutions that will improve rail service for the aggregates industry, while we seek to supply construction projects around the country with the materials needed to build.

NSSGA represents the aggregates and industrial sand industry of our country, with over 9,000 facilities and more than 100,000 employees in high-paying jobs. This industry procures 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.

Inadequate rail service has severe impacts on our industries. It hampers the supply of vital resources like aggregates and industrial sand, which are crucial for upgrading infrastructure, building resilient communities, and supporting American energy production. Aggregates producers depend on 1.1 million railcars to transport materials efficiently to expanding communities and infrastructure projects. When rail service is suspended or delayed, it becomes extremely difficult, if not impossible, to supplement these materials in the affected markets. This in turn leads to increased costs and drives inflationary pressures.

The Reliable Rail Service Act is a substantial step in the right direction to improve rail service. Ever since The Staggers Act of 1980, the common carrier obligation has lacked a clear definition, leaving many in the industry confused over growing ambiguity around the principle. The current market conditions, along with railroad consolidation and operating decisions, have led to a decrease in capacity on our nation's freight rail network, making a clear and concise definition of this principle even more important to our industries.



Defining precise criteria for the Surface Transportation Board (STB) to evaluate whether a rail carrier has breached its obligation will level the playing field and improve service. We support granting the Board clear statutory guidelines and flexibility to accommodate specific circumstances of local rail carriers and shippers. This promotes transparency for all stakeholders, enhances oversight, tackles supply chain issues, and reduces costs.

The Reliable Service Act makes common sense changes to improve the efficiency of rail services. It will give clear definition to an unclear statute that is decades old and will provide STB with guidelines and the oversight ability they need to correct the rail transportation challenges faced by the aggregates industry. During the Senate's deliberations on this bill, we urge consideration for our industries, aiming to enhance the transportation of vital construction materials and industrial sand to the market. Doing so will ensure needed materials are getting to the market on time, which is essential to keeping energy prices low and addressing our infrastructure challenges.

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

If you have any questions, please reach out anytime.

Sincerely,

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

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

