

January 15, 2019

The Honorable Patty Murray
154 Russell SOB
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Murray,

The Yakima City Council is concerned about federal government actions that could undercut private sector investment in the freight rail industry. The Council's concerns include the Surface Transportation Board's (STB) proposed regulations that are referred to by some as "forced access." The proposed regulations could serve to undermine the resilience of our state and regional economy by diminishing the strength of the rail industry. It is important that businesses have reliable and uninterrupted access to efficient freight transportation to ensure agricultural and other products produced in the Yakima Valley are able to compete nationally and internationally.

The proposed regulations could result in railroads being required to provide competitors with access to their private rail lines. Imposing such regulations would be a step away from the current regulatory system, which protects a nationwide freight rail network that businesses rely on to meet customer requirements.

Regulations like those being considered by the STB could negatively impact business activity by slowing the movement of goods in our state and across the country. When local businesses are negatively affected by government regulations, so are the communities in which those businesses are located. The affordable and reliable movement of goods is important for the Yakima area and the Central Washington region as well as the entire state.

The Yakima City Council urges you to carefully monitor the proposed regulations under consideration at the STB and the impact they could have on businesses in the Yakima Valley and across the nation. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,