

Surface Transportation Board Public Hearing

The 25th Anniversary of the Staggers Rail Act of 1980: A Review and Look Ahead STB Ex Parte No. 658

Opening Statement

Surface Transportation Board Vice Chairman W. Douglas Buttrey

Good morning...We have a lot of track to cover today and I do not want to reduce our velocity with a lengthy opening statement. I have read the statements so I would hope that those who come with oral presentations summarize their remarks so we can reduce dwell times as well. I have three guiding principles that will govern how I view these proceedings: (1) few, if any, real good solutions originate in the halls of government, (2) any suggestion that all available rail resources are being efficiently and equitably allocated will be met with skepticism, and (3) the free enterprise marketplace is almost always the best arbiter of commercial activity. I had a boss once who was fond of saying..."bring me solutions not problems... if WE are not smart enough to figure out how to serve our customers...someone else will". That admonition seems to be particularly applicable to our proceedings today. Thank you Mr. Chairman and I look forward to hearing from all our witnesses today.