

Statement of Senator Cleland  
Hearing on the STB 15-Month Merger Moratorium and Rulemaking Proceeding  
March 23, 2000

The Surface Transportation Board (STB) deserves the appreciation of rail employees, customers and investors for its forward-looking decision on establishing rules for judging future rail mergers. The current instability and service disruptions as described in four days of public hearings by the Board earlier this month pointed to the need for a pause before the industry embarks on a path leading to a rapid, final and, in my view, premature re-structuring.

Georgia is crisscrossed by the lines of two major railroads and is home to thousands of rail employees and shippers. Our ports, agriculture, and manufacturing plants depend on the rails, and the Board's decision will ensure a period of much needed stability in the industry. I believe that the STB has acted appropriately and the regulatory process should be permitted to continue without interference.

I commend the Board and its staff for their diligent work to ensure that the public interest is well served.