

Opening Statement of Michelle A. Schultz, Nominee to the Surface Transportation Board before the Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation of the United States Senate - April 11, 2018

Thank you Chairman Thune, Ranking Member Nelson, and distinguished Members of the Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee. I am honored to appear before you today as you consider my nomination as a Member of the Surface Transportation Board (“Board”). I am also grateful to President Trump for his nomination.

For over eleven years, I have dedicated my career to serving the public in various roles with the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (“SEPTA”), the nation’s sixth largest provider of public transportation. While I currently serve as Deputy General Counsel to SEPTA, I have also served in a variety of roles touching on policy, legislation and regulations. This has given me the opportunity to have a broad based understanding of railroad operations and the importance of the relationships the railroads share with their customers. I have also handled compliance issues at the local, state and federal levels pertaining to the construction of railroad lines and issues pertaining to interoperability. These experiences have given me a firm grasp of the challenges and opportunities facing the industry and the stakeholders that rely on it. I am very excited about the prospect of serving the public at the federal level, as transportation is so vital to our citizens and the nation’s economy.

Prior to joining SEPTA, I was a law clerk for the Superior Court of Pennsylvania and the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. Additionally, I was an attorney at a large law firm in Philadelphia for approximately five years. My practice focused on creditor’s rights and commercial litigation.

As you are well aware, the Board is the economic regulator of the rail industry charged by Congress with resolving railroad rate and service disputes as well as proposed railroad mergers, among other issues. The efficiency of freight and intercity passenger rail transportation is vital to the nation’s mobility and economic competitiveness. While our nation’s rail system generally performs well, challenges arise due to numerous issues including increased demand for service; track sharing; the ongoing need to maintain existing infrastructure; and the need for increased capacity. Because freight rail and intercity passenger rail serve an integral role in enhancing mobility within the United States, it is incumbent upon the Board to approach matters brought before it by conducting a thorough analysis of the facts and adjudicating matters in an impartial manner within the bounds of its jurisdiction and the law. If confirmed, I vow to utilize my transportation policy, regulatory, and legal experience to address the significant challenges presented to the Board in a fair and impartial manner. If confirmed, I look forward to furthering the Board’s mission by working closely with the Board staff, my fellow Board Members, stakeholders, and the Members of this Committee to address the many important issues that come before the Board.

Thank you for your time and I look forward to answering any questions that you may have.