

Statement by Ann Begeman  
Nominee for Member, Surface Transportation Board  
Before the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation  
March 10, 2011

Thank you, Chairman Rockefeller, Ranking Member Hutchison, and members of the Committee, for holding this hearing to consider the nominees before you today. I will try to be brief, and I ask that my full statement be included in the record.

It is an honor to appear before you as the President's nominee to the Surface Transportation Board (STB). Having worked in the Senate for over 20 years, 12 of those as a proud Commerce Committee staffer, many of you know me quite well. But I want to briefly touch on my background for the benefit of those who are new to the Committee.

I grew up on a farm in Humboldt, South Dakota, and moved to Washington after graduating from college to work for my hometown Senator, Larry Pressler. It is Senator Pressler who first gave me the chance to work on transportation issues. I moved to this Committee when he became chairman, and I continued on when Senator McCain became chairman. I covered surface transportation and other issues for the Committee for 9 years until becoming Senator McCain's Legislative Director in 2004. I then returned to the Committee two years ago to work on surface transportation issues for Senators Hutchison and Thune, and soon after, also took on the staff director duties.

I returned to the Committee for two reasons: First, I very much wanted to reengage on transportation policy issues, as I feel strongly that there is a very appropriate federal role in ensuring the viability, safety, and security of our nation's transportation system. Second, during my previous years on the Committee, it operated largely in a bipartisan manner, and I hoped that in the post-Presidential election environment at the time, the Committee might still have at least some level of the bipartisanship that had allowed it to be so effective in the past. As it turns out, my expectations were surpassed.

As I mentioned, I have covered the Committee's surface transportation portfolio for a number of years, including when the Committee sunset the Interstate Commerce Commission and established the STB and, more recently, when the Committee passed the STB Reauthorization Act in the last Congress. While I have had a good deal of hands on experience with legislation concerning the Board and its duties, and have had the opportunity to meet countless times over the years with its stakeholders, I also recognize that I still have much to learn. And, I am determined to do so.

If confirmed to serve as a member of the STB, I will approach that position fundamentally in the same way I have conducted myself as a Senate staffer: I will work hard to understand the issues; I will listen without bias to all stakeholders; I will strive to be fair; I will never forget that I am accountable to the taxpayers; and I will always follow the guidance of the law and make my decisions accordingly.

Again, thank you. I look forward to answering any questions you may have.