

December 10, 2024

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Shalanda Young
Director
Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20503

Subject: Urgent Request to Finalize Federal Railroad Administration's Proposed Rule on Freight Car Safety Standards

Dear Secretary Buttigieg and Director Young,

On behalf of the Rail Security Alliance and other industry stakeholders, I am writing to emphasize the pressing need for the swift finalization of the Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA) proposed rule to modify Railroad Freight Car Safety Standards (49 CFR Part 215). This critical regulation, enacted under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (49 U.S.C. § 20171), will provide essential protections for our nation's freight rail infrastructure while ensuring the long-term health of the domestic manufacturing sector. FRA published a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) on December 8, 2023, and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) determined the rule to be "non-significant."

The proposed rule establishes much-needed safeguards against the risks posed by certain foreign-sourced railcar components and technologies, which could compromise the integrity of our transportation networks. By implementing limitations on these materials and prohibiting sensitive technologies sourced from adversarial nations, this regulation directly addresses vulnerabilities in the freight rail supply chain. It reinforces the security of our critical infrastructure.

However, delays in finalizing this regulation create unnecessary risks for the freight rail industry and the broader U.S. economy. A robust domestic freight rail sector is fundamental to national security, efficient supply chains, and economic growth. This rule must be finalized promptly to bolster the competitiveness of American manufacturing and protect the security of goods moving across our rail networks daily.

We respectfully urge your office to expedite reviewing and finalizing this proposed rule, reaffirming our nation's commitment to resilient infrastructure and strong domestic industries. Please contact the Rail Security Alliance's Executive Director, Erik Olson, at eolson@vennstrategies.com for additional details or to discuss how we can support this critical process.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

