

# Transportation Research Board Committee for the Study of Freight Rail Transportation and Regulation

Federal Railroad Administration

January 10, 2014



# Background

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- Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (Public Law 109-59; SAFETEA-LU) enacted August 10, 2005.
- Section 9007 requires the Secretary of Transportation to enter into an agreement with the Transportation Research Board (TRB) of the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) to conduct a comprehensive study of the Nation's railroad transportation system since the enactment of the Staggers Rail Act of 1980.
- Statute requires agreement between the Secretary and TRB to be completed within 180 days after enactment.
- Not later than one year after the agreement, the Secretary shall transmit the results to the T&I committee and the Commerce committee.



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The statute requires that the study address and make recommendations on:

1. the performance of the Nation's major railroads regarding service levels, service quality, and rates;
2. the projected demand for freight transportation over the next two decades and the constraints limiting the railroads' ability to meet that demand;
3. the effectiveness of public policy in balancing the need for railroads to earn adequate returns with those of shippers for reasonable rates and adequate service; and
4. the future role of the Surface Transportation Board (STB) in regulating railroad rates, service levels, and the railroads' common carrier obligations, particularly as railroads may become revenue adequate.



# Issues to Completing the Study

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- Statute authorized to be appropriated \$1,000,000 for fiscal year 2006 and \$800,000 fro 2007 to complete the study.
- Since funding was not available, DOT/FRA entered into discussions with committee staff and suggest alternatives.
- Surface Transportation Board Study:
  - *A Study of Competition in the U.S. Freight Railroad Industry and Analysis of Proposals that Might Enhance Competition*
  - [www.stb.dot.gov/stb/elibrary/CompetitionStudy.html](http://www.stb.dot.gov/stb/elibrary/CompetitionStudy.html)
- USDA/USDOT Joint Study
  - *Study of Rural Transportation Issues*
  - [www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/RuralTransportationStudy](http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/RuralTransportationStudy)



# Background

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- October 2011 correspondence from Senator Rockefeller to Secretary LaHood states that \$1,000,000 in funding is available.
- June 2013, FRA notified TRB about funding and study charge.
- September 2013, FRA and TRB signed a grant agreement to complete study.
- Now the clock is ticking on statutory time requirement.

