

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



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DOLE URGES ICC TO GIVE MORE CONSIDERATION TO RAIL MERGER

Washington, DC -- Senator Bob Dole (R-KS) has urged the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) to "withhold a final decision" pending "additional agreements which would significantly reduce" opposition to a merger of the Santa Fe and Southern Pacific railroads.

"I was both surprised and disappointed by the ICC's tentative decision disapproving the merger between Santa Fe and Southern Pacific," Sen. Dole said in a letter to commission Chairman Heather J. Graddison. "In my view, this decision may significantly reduce reliable and affordable rail service for shippers in the Midwest and West, and I urge the commission to take every step possible to avoid that result."

Sen. Dole said he has had a series of discussions with officials of the Santa Fe and Southern Pacific railroads - as well as with officials of the Union Pacific, Denver & Rio Grande Western, and Kansas City Southern railroads - concerning the merger. "I have urged all parties with an interest in these proceedings to reach private agreements which would result in significantly enhanced competition in the central and southern rail corridors, thus paving the way for the commission to approve the merger," Sen. Dole said in the letter.

Sen. Dole said the announced agreement on Sept. 22 by the Denver & Rio Grande Western and Santa Fe Southern Pacific should "substantially enhance competition in the central corridor." He noted, "The fact that Denver & Rio Grande Western and Santa Fe Southern Pacific were to reach an agreement without the benefit of knowing the basis for the commission's tentative decision is encouraging to me."

Sen. Dole said he has been in contact with other railroads which also have an interest in the Santa Fe and Southern Pacific merger, and "can report a strong willingness to reach additional agreements which would significantly reduce potential opposition to the merger."

"I strongly urge the commission to withhold a final decision in this matter until it can appropriately take into consideration the Denver & Rio Grande Western - Santa Fe Southern Pacific accord," said Sen. Dole, "as well as the significant possibility that additional agreements can be reached which will alleviate concerns about the potential anti-competitive effects of the merger."