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VETERANS' AFFAIRS

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510 - 3505

May 22, 2023

Mr. Alan Shaw
President and CEO
Norfolk Southern Corporation
650 W. Peachtree Street NW
Atlanta, GA 30308

Mr. Shaw:

I hear from Ohioans across the state who are concerned that old and dilapidated rail infrastructure poses a threat to local economies and to residents' safety. In too many cases, your company has failed to properly maintain and repair the bridges and other infrastructure you own in Ohio, leaving local communities to deal with the consequences and bear the costs.

First, I am requesting a comprehensive list of all Ohio rail bridges owned or maintained by your company.

Second, I request that this comprehensive list include your company's assessment of each bridge's condition. This assessment should not be limited to an assertion that a bridge is "structurally sound." Please provide a complete assessment of any damage or deterioration identified for an individual bridge, including damaged or falling concrete, temporary repair measures, measures employed to prevent concrete or other building materials from falling onto roads or waterways, and any other site conditions that negatively affect the community, including drainage issues, unrepaired lighting or sidewalks or graffiti.

Third, note in the comprehensive list every bridge in Ohio that has a problem that a government entity, elected official, or community representative has asked to be addressed by your respective railroads.

Finally, I am requesting a specifically-tailored action plan for any structurally-unsound bridge or any bridge that, while structurally-sound, may cause harm to the public due to its state of disrepair.

Mr. Shaw, thank you for your letter dated May 9, in which you responded to my correspondence regarding Cleveland's Lake Avenue bridge. Your commitment to assessing the bridge and your order for Norfolk Southern personnel to remove any mud, water, and debris from underneath the

bridge is appreciated. However, your letter promised only to “endeavor to implement aesthetic improvements alongside any repairs.” That is insufficient. Please advise me and the Cleveland community when repairs can be made so that wood will no longer be utilized to catch falling concrete and when repairs to the bridge’s cast iron facade will be completed.

Similar to Cleveland’s Lake Avenue Bridge, I have received additional reports of falling concrete and other hazards involving Norfolk Southern rail bridges in both Elyria and Amherst, Ohio. These deteriorated bridges have been repeatedly dismissed by your engineers and business representatives, stating that bridges merely need to hold the weight of freight passing overhead. This is obviously unacceptable, especially to the residents that drive or walk underneath your company’s bridges and are who are fearful of falling concrete or other building material.

Norfolk Southern’s rail bridge in Elyria on East Bridge Street has had concrete falling onto cars and local officials are also concerned about four other rail bridges on Cedar Street, Elm Street, West Avenue, and Washington Avenue (both sides). Norfolk Southern also has several rail bridges of concern in Amherst, including on West Street, Church Street, Main Street, and Milan Avenue.

Your company is responsible for this infrastructure, and your company has a duty to proactively invest a fair share of revenues into properly maintaining tracks and bridges within the local communities that host your trains. Structural integrity is vital – but is not sufficient. Decaying, decrepit bridges remain a threat to local communities. Anything less than full repair of all of your infrastructure in Ohio communities is insufficient.

I expect your full report as soon as possible.

Sincerely,



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator