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February 18, 2014

Ms. Cynthia Brown
Chief, Section of Administration
Office of Proceedings
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20423-0111

Re: STB Docket No. 42139, James Valley Grain, LLC v. BNSF Railway Company

Dear Ms. Brown,

I write to express my support for a resolution to the non-discriminatory through rate dispute between Burlington Northern Santé Fe (BNSF) Railroad and James Valley Grain, LLC.

James Valley Grain is a joint venture grain elevator cooperative comprised of more than 450 individual farm members headquartered in Dickey County, North Dakota. The grain distribution services provided by James Valley Grain are critical to the local economy, enabling growers to effectively market the commodities they grow and ensure those commodities reach sale destinations in locations both in the United States and throughout the world. The past successes of BNSF, James Valley Grain and other participants in the grain shipping industry have helped the United States develop a world class product delivery system that is further aided by superior internal logistics. However, maintaining this delivery system requires additional investment. Without an effective and reliable distribution service, growers in North Dakota will be negatively impacted.

To better meet the marketing and distribution needs of farmers in southeastern North Dakota, James Valley Grain has initiated plans to construct a new state-of-the-art $30 million elevator at Verona, North Dakota. This grain shuttle facility will be located along the Red River Valley and Western, a short line rail provider that partners with BNSF to ship products for their customers. Once completed, the elevator will provide both railroads with volumes of over 20 million bushels of business.

According to the petitioner, BNSF has yet to agree to terms for a rate schedule for the proposed shuttle facility at Verona, which has stalled the construction of the grain elevator for more than two years. I am interested in seeing this dispute resolved so the project can move forward and am hopeful the STB can play a productive role in bringing James Valley Grain, LLC and BNSF together on terms that will be mutually beneficial.

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Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Heidi Heitkamp
United States Senator

cc:

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