AFPM President and CEO Chet Thompson this week submitted comments to leaders of the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee after the Committee's inaugural hearing on the state of U.S. transportation infrastructure and supply chains failed to include customer perspectives. AFPM requested that these comments—offered on behalf of fuel refiners and petrochemical manufacturers, who are among the nation's top freight rail shipping customers—be added to the official February 1 hearing record. Excerpts from Chet Thompson's letter are below:

"While AFPM members utilize all aspects of midstream infrastructure, this statement focuses on freight rail, as it poses the most significant challenges to our operations and supply chains. Indeed, reduced rail competition and the resulting deterioration in service have greatly hindered our members' ability to move feedstocks to their facilities and products to consumers."

"…over the past few decades, through consolidation the number of major United States railroads has drastically contracted, resulting in decreased rail competition, degraded rail service, exponential rate increases, and higher prices for consumers."

"AFPM supports bipartisan legislation to reauthorize the Surface Transportation Board (STB) and to provide it with the resources and authorities it needs to quickly address rail service issues. More specifically, AFPM encourages Congress to:

1. Update the Common Carrier Obligation
2. Foster Increased Competition in Freight Rail
3. Enhance the STB's ability to address critical service issues

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About AFPM:

The American Fuel & Petrochemical Manufacturers (AFPM) is the leading trade association representing the makers of the fuels that keep us moving, the petrochemicals that are the essential building blocks for modern life, and the midstream companies that get our feedstocks and products where they need to go. We make the products that make life better, safer and more sustainable — we make progress.

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