

STATEMENT OF SENATOR JOHN MCCAIN
FULL COMMITTEE HEARING ON PENDING NOMINATIONS
SEPTEMBER 28, 1999

As Chairman of the Committee, I would like to thank Senator Hutchison for chairing today's hearing on several pending nominations. I also want to take this opportunity to express my strong support for the reconfirmation of Linda Morgan to serve as a member, and Chairman, of the Surface Transportation Board (STB).

Ms. Morgan's extensive professional experience and impressive qualifications have been invaluable to the Board. Throughout her tenure, she has consistently worked to enforce the transportation policies and public interest standards as established by law. Ms. Morgan further deserves our commendation for the leadership she demonstrated in managing the closure of the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) and the establishment of the STB. That was no small feat. We owe thanks to both Chairman Morgan and her very dedicated and capable staff.

Since its creation, the STB has made tremendous strides. It has dealt with some of the most challenging rail transportation matters that have arisen in many years, including the very difficult service crisis in the West. It has also managed to reduce the backlog of pending cases which it inherited from the former ICC. I can think of no other federal entity that has carried out such a vast work load with such a limited level of resources.

Many critical transportation decisions and responsibilities remain before the STB and these challenges are not expected to diminish. The achievements already attained by the Board are greatly attributed to Chairman Morgan's tireless dedication and commitment. Therefore, in my judgement, Linda Morgan's reconfirmation as Chairman of the STB should be a top priority. The American citizens would be well served by Ms. Morgan's reappointment. We need more forward-thinking and committed individuals like Linda to serve in the federal government.

It is my intent for the Committee to act swiftly on her confirmation.