

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4802

November 2, 1999

Michael Sussman  
Strategic Rail Finance  
4100 main Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19127

Dear Michael:

First, my apologies for not being able to join you as you begin the alliance in Chicago this week. I hope you will convey our strong support for the efforts of shortline and regional railroad owners in West Virginia and across the nation as they continue to serve our rural communities and industrial infrastructure.

Additionally, I want to thank you for your ongoing interest in this office's transportation concerns and questions. As you know, despite our concerted efforts to improve the long-range viability of the freight transportation system, we are too rarely contacted by the railroad industry. The limited communication makes even more challenging the task of addressing policy issues that primarily affect the Class I carriers without creating any unintended consequences for successful Class II and III operations.

For the last two years, Strategic Rail Finance has provided valuable input into our understanding of industry dynamics and needs, particularly with regard to railroad financing issues. In this regard, your credit history and financial statement study to facilitate investment in Class II and III railroads is an important and innovative near-term approach.

Please let us know how we can further support this project and best of luck launching the new organization. I'll look forward to hearing of your progress this week.

Sincerely,



Kerry A. Ates  
General Counsel to  
Senator John D. Rockefeller IV