

TESTIMONY
Surface Transportation Board Field Hearing (Fargo, ND)
"United States Rail Service Issues"
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Thank you to the Surface Transportation Board for holding this field hearing in Fargo, and thank you to Senators Heitkamp and Hoeven, Congressman Cramer, and Governor Dalrymple for being here and bringing attention to this important issue. Also, thank you to today's witnesses, especially Commissioner Frederickson and representatives of Minnesota agriculture.

Dependable rail service is crucial, even more so now that we're beginning harvest season. USDA is forecasting an above average harvest this year for many crops, yet a number of elevators are reporting that they have no, or very limited, storage space for new crop deliveries. Crops need to get to market, and congestion hurts the local economy.

Earlier this spring, I sent a letter to the Surface Transportation Board with Minnesota Congressmen Walz and Nolan to address our concerns about the impact service delays were having on the agricultural industry. It is my understanding that while there has been some improvement, these delays remain a serious problem.

Farmers, elevator operators, and ethanol plants are just a few examples of folks I've heard from in my district who tell me how powerless they feel in this situation.

I've met numerous times with the rail companies to discuss this issue and get a better understanding of the constraints facing the industry. Some rail companies have already set aside long-term funding to make infrastructure investments to prevent future delays. While these efforts are encouraging, I believe there is still more that needs to be done.

We need all sides to come together and figure out a way to resolve the current rail service delays. Hopefully today's hearing will be a positive discussion on how to resolve this problem.

Once again, thank you to the Surface Transportation Board for holding today's hearing and your efforts to find a solution. I'm glad we could convene in a location close to those who are being impacted by this issue.

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