

Congress of the United States
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Mr. Daniel R. Elliott III
Chairman
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20423

Dear Chairman Elliott,

We write in regards to the Surface Transportation Board's April 10, 2014 public hearing on recent service problems in the U.S. rail network and wish to thank you for listening to our producer's concerns while seeking solutions to address this important issue.

As Members of Congress from the Midwest, we have heard from a wide range of stakeholders impacted by rail delays: ethanol producers who experienced dwell times which jumped 40% in late December and remained 25% above normal through the first quarter of 2014, electrical utilities with precariously low stockpiles, often below 10 days, grain elevators who normally expect to ship 800 cars per month, currently averaging around 300. If this poor rail service continues it will cost farmers millions of extra dollars at the very time of year when they are dependent on sales to finance spring planting. It goes without saying that dependable rail service is of crucial importance. Congestion drives up the costs of our products and hurts local economies.

We are encouraged with the short term efforts of BNSF and Canadian Pacific to hire workers, purchase more capacity and make infrastructural improvements. We hope these efforts continue until the current congestion is resolved. In the long term, we urge the STB to work in concert with the railways to plan for the future needs of rail shippers in light of the projected growth in crude shipment. Rail shipment of crude is up 1363% since 2010. This increase comes at the expense of other shippers. We simply urge that commodities, other than crude, be treated fairly and equitably.

Thank you again for addressing this critical situation. We ask that you take the concerns and issues raised in the April 10th, 2014 hearing seriously, and that you work with the railroad industry and shippers to find a long-term solution to these service delays.

Sincerely,



Tim Walz
Member of Congress



Collin C. Peterson
Member of Congress



Rick Nolan
Member of Congress