August 3, 2026

Mr. Jerry Peck
President & General Manager
The Belt Railway Company of Chicago
6900 South Central Avenue, Building 2
Bedford Park, IL 60638

Dear Mr. Peck,

We are writing today concerning the ongoing deterioration of service metrics on the Belt Railway Company of Chicago (BRC) and request that you provide the Board with an update and outlook on the operations of the BRC. We are concerned with recent car volumes and dwell times on the BRC, particularly at Clearing Yard.

As you know, the Surface Transportation Board (STB or Board) monitors the health of the freight railroad network to ensure the network is providing efficient and reliable service that meets the needs of the public and supports our nation's economy. As you also know, the Chicago gateway, where all Class I railroads interchange traffic, is crucial to the national freight rail network. Severe and persistent congestion in and around Chicago can impair regional fluidity, with effects on major economic sectors including manufacturing, energy, and agriculture, and can also have ripple effects reaching deeper across the network.

In particular, the BRC's Clearing Yard is critical to the network and thus the nation's supply chain. In recent weeks, the Board has observed concerning trends in the freight railroad performance metrics reported to the agency on a weekly basis.[1] Specifically, average weekly railcar inventory in Clearing Yard has increased by 57 percent in comparison to the same week last year (Week 30), from 3,212 cars in 2025 to 5,048 cars in 2026. Over the same time period, average dwell in Clearing Yard has increased by 72 percent, rising from about 18 hours to 31 hours. In addition, since the beginning of April 2026, average weekly railcar inventory in Clearing Yard has increased by 26 percent, up from 4,012 cars, with average yard dwell increasing by 63 percent, up from 19 hours. The simultaneous increase in car inventory and dwell in the yard is concerning and could be indicative of growing congestion in the larger Chicago complex and the region.

[1] The Board collects railroad performance metrics on a weekly basis in STB Docket No. EP 724 (Sub-No. 4), U.S. Rail Serv. Issues—Performance Data Reporting.

To enable the Board to better understand the current health and outlook for BRC's operations at Clearing Yard going forward, we request that you provide the Board with a detailed explanation of BRC's view of these trends and its plans to work with Class I carriers to recover operations at Clearing Yard to normal levels. We also request that you provide the following metrics for Clearing Yard on a weekly basis, for the prior seven days.

Average Daily:[2]

- Dwell;
- Inventory;
- Cars humped;
- Cars re-humped;
- Number of cars received;
- Number of cars departed;
- On-time departure percentage.

Please also identify, by interchanging railroad:

- Weekly on-time departure percentage;
- The number of extras and annulments run inbound to BRC and outbound from BRC, and any such requests denied by BRC;
- Average daily number of cars received compared to the daily quota established by BRC;
- Weekly number of "haulbacks" where the car(s) arrive and depart on the same railroad.

These metrics should be submitted to the Board by email to data.reporting@stb.gov by noon ET every Monday to encompass the performance for the previous 7 days at Clearing Yard (Monday through Sunday). Staff from the Board's Office of Public Assistance, Governmental Affairs, and Compliance (OPAGAC) are available to meet with BRC to discuss the form and format for these submissions to ensure the data is provided in a manner that is useful to the agency, BRC, and the public. The Board requests the first submission of this data on August 10, 2026, and subsequent submissions until such time as BRC's average daily dwell and average daily inventory have both normalized, on a sustained basis, to 2025 levels for the corresponding week.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this request. The BRC's service is extraordinarily important to our nation's freight rail network, and the agency will continue to intensively monitor this situation. The Board is committed to working with BRC and its connecting railroads to restore service levels and ensure supply chain fluidity. If you or your staff have any questions, please contact Ms. Janie Sheng, Director of OPAGAC, at 202-245-0238.

[2] While two of these metrics, Average Daily Inventory and Average Daily Dwell, are already submitted for Chicago terminal yards, including Clearing Yard, by the Chicago Transportation Coordination Office as part of the Board's EP 724 rail service data collection, that data is submitted to the Board each Wednesday for the seven-day period ending the prior Friday. In light of the current inventory and dwell issues, a shorter turnaround for the submission of this data is necessary to enable the agency to effectively monitor the situation.

Sincerely,

Patrick J. Fuchs
Chairman

Michelle A. Schultz
Vice Chairman

Karen J. Hedlund
Member

Richard J. Kloster
Member

cc: Mr. Steve Angel, President and Chief Executive Officer, CSX Transportation
Mr. Keith Creel, President and Chief Executive Officer, Canadian Pacific Kansas City Railway
Ms. Katie Farmer, President and Chief Executive Officer, BNSF Railway
Mr. Mark George, President and Chief Executive Officer, Norfolk Southern Railway
Ms. Tracy Robinson, President and Chief Executive Officer, Canadian National Railway
Mr. Jim Vena, President and Chief Executive Officer, Union Pacific Railroad