



Northeast Region

The Honorable Martin Oberman  
Chairman  
Surface Transportation Board  
395 E St., S.W.  
Washington, DC 20423-0001

Dear Chairman Oberman:

The National Waste and Recycling Association (NWRA) appreciates the Surface Transportation Board's (STB) mission to resolve disputes in support of an efficient, competitive, and economically viable interstate surface transportation freight rail network that meets the needs of its users.

I write to relay serious complaints from NWRA member companies about significant rail service disruptions involving CSX Transportation. These disruptions are interfering with interstate commerce, run counter to efforts to address the climate change crisis and threaten public health and safety when society's waste materials are not properly transported for disposal.

The NWRA consists of more than 700 members representing a mix of publicly traded and privately owned local, regional and Fortune 500 national and international companies. NWRA represents approximately 70 percent of the private sector waste and recycling market. Our members provide one of society's most essential services to maintaining the quality of American life. The delivery of waste and recycling services impacts all residential, commercial and industrial properties on a daily basis.

NWRA's preference is to seek commercial solutions between individual rail customers and their rail carriers. However, the service issues that our member companies are raising indicate that the problem is a network problem affecting the entire northeast region of the country. For example, in Boston, NWRA members are unable to load rail cars due to ongoing service issues involving the delivery of rail cars. In the meantime, railcars loaded with waste are waiting to be moved out by the railroad. Another example, in Connecticut and New York, rail operations are being negatively impacted due to the excessive backlog of cars waiting to switch at CSX's Selkirk Yard in Albany, NY.

Many other NWRA members have similar ongoing rail service-related issues including missed switches, extended transit times, unfilled car orders, and the inability to contact customer service and operating personnel at the railroad. All of these issues are serious service failures and the situation is growing more tenuous each day. Unfortunately, the service issues are negatively affecting customers including municipalities and businesses across the region.



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Collectively the problems plaguing rail customers in the Northeast are of serious concern. Therefore, we would request the STB engage with the railroads in a meaningful way to correct the issues at the earliest possible time. Simply asking for “service recovery plans” has not resolved the issues. Concrete additional steps need to be taken showing the STB in a more active role to obligate the railroads to perform. I know the STB is aware of the issue. In one filing (STB Docket No. EP 724), CSX’s rail service performance data clearly shows that the CSX network is underperforming. Specifically, over much of 2021, system average train speed was down 6%; average terminal dwell is up 16%; and average loaded cars not moving in 48 hours is up 98% against established baseline numbers.

This poor performance is simply unacceptable as our members rely on rail to manage society’s waste in an environmentally sound manner. As the STB is responsible for supporting an efficient and viable surface transportation freight rail network, we need your engagement. The fact that the problems have lingered so long is troubling and unsettling to the users of the railroad system for which the STB is responsible to oversee and regulate.

Any help you can provide would be most welcome. Please feel free follow up on this letter with our Vice President for the Northeast Region Lew Dubuque. I have included his contact information below.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Darrell K. Smith".

Darrell K. Smith  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
National Waste & Recycling Association

Lew Dubuque  
Vice President, Northeast Region  
2719 Doelner Circle  
Castleton on Hudson, NY 12033

Contact Information

E-mail: [ldubuque@wasterecycling.org](mailto:ldubuque@wasterecycling.org)  
Cell: (518) 961-2587