



SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

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STB ISSUES HEARING NOTICE FOR URGENT ISSUES IN FREIGHT RAIL SERVICE

Today the Surface Transportation Board announced that it will hold a public hearing on April 26 and April 27, 2022, on recent rail service problems and recovery efforts involving several Class I carriers.

The Board will direct executive-level officials, including operating and human resources officials, of BNSF Railway Company, CSX Transportation, Inc., Norfolk Southern Railway Company, and Union Pacific Railroad Company to appear. The Board will also invite and welcome the attendance of executive-level officials from Canadian National Railway Company, Kansas City Southern Railway Company, and Canadian Pacific Railway Company. Other carriers, rail customers, labor organizations, and other interested parties are welcome to report on recent service issues.

Rail network reliability is essential to the Nation's economy and is a foremost priority of the Board. In recent weeks, the Board has heard informally from a broad range of stakeholders about inconsistent and unreliable rail service. The Board has also received reports from the Secretary of Agriculture and other stakeholders about the serious impact of these service trends on rail users, particularly with respect to shippers of agricultural and energy products. These reports have been validated by the Board's weekly rail service performance data. For these reasons, the Board has determined that the service issues may have reached a level that requires action by the Board, and it is imperative that the Board hear from carriers, rail customers, labor organizations, and other interested persons. Given the serious nature of the service issues reported to the Board, in addition to providing as much visibility as possible to all aspects of the current service issues, the Board expects the information provided at the hearing to inform any potential future Board actions to ameliorate the problems that have been reported.

In announcing the hearing, Board Chairman Martin Oberman said:

“During my time on the Board, I have raised concerns about the primacy Class I railroads have placed on lowering their operating ratios and satisfying their shareholders even at the cost of their customers. Part of that strategy has involved cutting their work force to the bare bones in order to reduce costs. Over the last 6 years, the Class Is collectively have reduced their work

force by 29% - that is about 45,000 employees cut from the payrolls. In my view, all of this has directly contributed to where we are today – rail users experiencing serious deteriorations in rail service because, on too many parts of their networks, the railroads simply do not have a sufficient number of employees.

This hearing is not just about where we are but also about where we are going. The Board expects the railroads to explain the actions they will take to fix these issues. The Board will also consider stakeholder views on how it can use its authority—including measures to address emergencies, increase transparency, and promote reliable service—to ameliorate problems on the network.”

The public hearing will be held on April 26 and April 27, 2022, beginning at 9:30 a.m. ET each day, in the Hearing Room of the Board’s headquarters in Washington, D.C., and will be open for public observation. The hearing will be available for viewing on the Board’s website. Any person wishing to speak at the hearing should file with the Board a notice of intent to participate as soon as possible but no later than April 14, 2022. Submission of written testimony by hearing participants is optional but any written testimony or comments should be submitted by April 22, 2022.

Today’s hearing notice in [Urgent Issues in Freight Rail Service](#), Docket No. EP 770, may be viewed and downloaded [here](#).

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