



Surface Transportation Board
Washington, D.C. 20423-0001

September 20, 2024

Mr. Michael J. Seyfert
President and Chief Executive Officer
National Grain and Feed Association
1400 Crystal Drive, Suite 260
Arlington, VA 22202

Mr. Meredith Allen
Chairman, Board of Directors
Amcot
P.O. Box 2827
Lubbock, TX 79408

Ms. Leigh Ann Sayen
Chair, Board of Directors
American Feed Industry Association
2101 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 810
Arlington, VA 22201

Mr. Edward Overdevest
Chairman, Executive Committee
AmericanHort
2130 Stella Court
Columbus, OH 43215

Mr. Scott Heisel
President and Chief Executive Officer
American Malting Barley Association
375 Bishops Way, Suite 224
Brookfield, WI 53005

Mr. John Bode
President and Chief Executive Officer
Corn Refiners Association
1701 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Suite 400
Washington, DC 20006

Mr. Josh Sandt
Chairman of the Board
Forest Resources Association
1901 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Suite 1007
Washington, DC 20006

Mr. Lance Jungmeyer
President
Fresh Produce Association of the Americas
590 East Frontage Road
Nogales, AZ 85621

Mr. Tom Willis
Chair
Growth Energy
1401 Eye Street, NW, Suite 1220
Washington, DC 20005

Mr. John Berthold
President
Midwest Dry Bean Coalition c/o Green
Valley Bean Company
58473 State Highway 34
Park Rapids, MN 56470

Mr. Sebastian Belle
President, Board of Directors
National Aquaculture Association
P.O. Box 12759
Tallahassee, FL 32317

Mr. Ted McKinney
Chief Executive Officer
National Association of State Departments
of Agriculture
4350 North Fairfax Drive #810
Arlington, VA 22203

Mr. Keeff Felty
President
National Association of Wheat Growers
25 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Suite 500B
Washington, DC 20001

Mr. Chris Engelstad
President
National Barley Growers Association
600 Pennsylvania Avenue, S.E., Suite 300
Washington, DC 20003

Mr. Gary Adams
President and Chief Executive Officer
National Cotton Council of America
P.O. Box 2995
Cordova, TN 38088

Mr. Chuck Conner
President and Chief Executive Officer
National Council of Farmers Cooperatives
50 F Street NW, Suite 900
Washington, DC 20001

Ms. Kailee Tkacz Buller
President and Chief Executive Officer
National Oilseed Processors Association
1310 L Street NW, Suite 375
Washington, DC 20005

Ms. Alejandra Castillo
President and Chief Executive Officer
North American Export Grain Association
1400 Crystal Drive, Suite 260
Arlington, VA 22202

Ms. Jane DeMarchi
President
North American Millers' Association
1400 Crystal Drive, Suite 650
Arlington, VA 22202

Mr. Kent Swisher
President and Chief Executive Officer
North American Renderers Association
500 Montgomery Street, Suite 310
Alexandria, VA 22314

Ms. Dana Brooks
President and Chief Executive Officer
Pet Food Institute
1020 19th Street NW, Suite 225
Washington, DC 20036

Mr. Corey Rosenbusch
President and Chief Executive Officer
The Fertilizer Institute
4201 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 700
Arlington, VA 22203

Mr. Peter Bachmann
President and Chief Executive Officer
USA Rice
2101 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 610
Arlington, VA 22201

Mr. Danny Raulerson
Executive Director
US Dry Bean Council
9450 SW Gemini Drive
Beaverton, OR 97008

Ms. Marcela Garcia
Chief Executive Officer
US Rice Producers Association
25722 Kingsland Boulevard, Suite 203
Katy, TX 77494

Mr. Vince Peterson
President
US Wheat Associates
3103 10th Street N., Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22201

Dear Mr. Seyfert, Mr. Allen, Ms. Sayen, Mr. Overdevest, Mr. Heisel, Mr. Bode, Mr. Sandt, Mr. Jungmeyer, Mr. Willis, Mr. Berthold, Mr. Belle, Mr. McKinney, Mr. Felty, Mr. Engelstad, Mr. Adams, Mr. Conner, Ms. Buller, Ms. Castillo, Ms. DeMarchi, Mr. Swisher, Ms. Brooks, Mr. Rosenbusch, Mr. Bachmann, Mr. Raulerson, Ms. Garcia, and Mr. Peterson,

Thank you for your recent letter regarding rail capacity issues in Mexico affecting the agricultural supply chain. I appreciate hearing your view that rail demand in Mexico is outpacing Ferromex's capacity, and about how these issues have affected the export of U.S. agricultural products to Mexico.

The Board has been monitoring reports of rail service issues in Mexico affecting rail traffic to and from the United States and has been in consistent contact with other federal agencies, including the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, that have been doing the same. The Board understands the importance of reliable rail service to U.S. agricultural exports.

As you may know, in July of this year I sent a letter to BNSF expressing concerns about their preparedness for the fall harvest season. In that letter I also expressed concern about disruptions to BNSF's service, particularly for grain shuttles going cross-border to and from Mexico, which you raised in your letter. In response, BNSF agreed that "service to and from Mexico has been undeniably challenged this year," and stated that their "contingency efforts are principally aimed at limiting the impact of those disruptions on the broader network." BNSF says they continue to work with their interchange partners to improve cross-border service and mitigate the impacts of service disruptions in Mexico.

Additionally, in late August the Board held its annual National Grain Car Council meeting. At that meeting the Board heard from shippers and railroads, including BNSF, Union Pacific, and CPKC, which as you know all move agricultural products to Mexico, about how they were preparing for the harvest season. My fellow Board members and I expressed our concerns about service to and from Mexico, including the need for carriers to provide shippers with adequate notice of embargoes and permitting requirements, and other changes to service that would help shippers plan accordingly.

The Board will continue to monitor these issues and remains engaged with stakeholders to support a resolution. I look forward to having further conversations on these issues and assisting shippers and railroads with identifying solutions. In the meantime, if your organizations have data or information that could assist with further understanding the situation, please provide it at your earliest convenience.

Thank you again for sharing your views with us. A copy of your letter and this reply have been placed on the Board's website as non-docketed public correspondence. If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Janie Sheng, Director of the Board's Office of Public Assistance, Governmental Affairs, and Compliance, at 202-245-0238.

Sincerely,



Robert E. Primus
Chairman

cc: The Honorable Tom Vilsack
The Honorable Katherine Tai
U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry
U.S. House Committee on Agriculture
U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation
U.S. House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
U.S. Senate Committee on Finance
U.S. House Committee on Ways and Means