

STB ADOPTS FINAL RULE REQUIRING CLASS I RAILROADS TO REPORT PERFORMANCE METRICS

The Surface Transportation Board announced today that it is adopting a final rule in U.S. Rail Service Issues—Performance Data Reporting, Docket EP 724 (Sub-No. 4) that will require all Class I railroads, and the Chicago Transportation Coordination Office (CTCO), through its Class I members, to report certain service performance metrics to the Board on a weekly, semiannual, and occasional basis.

The final rule is an outgrowth of the Board's response to widespread rail service problems that emerged in late 2013 and lasted into 2014. In order to remedy a lack of readily available performance data, the Board asked the Class I railroads in October 2014 to report publicly certain data on an interim basis, such as average train speed, average terminal dwell time, cars online, dwell time at origin, and coal and agricultural products loading statistics. By and large, the final rule announced today follows the contours of the interim request with modifications based on public comments and the Board's experience with the data reported under the interim order.

A key purpose of this rulemaking is to facilitate the Board's monitoring of current service conditions in the rail industry and identification of trends or aberrations that could indicate service problems. A corollary benefit is that shippers and other stakeholders will have access to the reported data to assist in their business decisions and supply-chain planning. Additionally, the cumulative data will provide the STB with reference points for measuring an individual railroad against its past performance.

The rule follows several rounds of public comment, which included one-on-one, ex parte meetings between stakeholders and Board staff. In general, shippers urged the Board to fashion more granular data requests, including corridor specific performance and a broader array of commodities. Railroad interests, by contrast, sought to limit and narrow the proposed requests. The Board adopted a middle ground, calling for data that will allow it to effectively monitor rail service performance. In order to reduce the burden on the rail industry, the Board also tailored the requests to information that railroads currently collect as part of their internal data runs.

"I am very pleased with the contents of this final rule, which will allow the Board to effectively monitor operating conditions in the railroad industry," stated STB Chairman Daniel R. Elliott III. "Also, I appreciate the valuable participation and input from our stakeholders and the work of STB staff in developing these rules."

Today's decision in Ex Parte 724 (Sub-No. 4) may be viewed and downloaded at the Board's website, www.stb.gov, under "E-LIBRARY / Decisions & Notices / 11/ 30 / 2016".

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