

**SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD DIRECTS "UP/SP" TO FILE INFORMATION IN
PROCEEDING ON RAIL SERVICE PROBLEMS IN WESTERN U.S.**

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Surface Transportation Board (Board) Chairman Linda J. Morgan announced today that the Board has prescribed information filing requirements for its proceeding on rail service problems in the western United States.

The Board's proceeding, which is described in detail in "Surface Transportation Board News" release No. 97-81 (October 2, 1997), is designed to review the status of railroad service in the western United States, and to assess proposals for solving existing rail service problems. To facilitate the resolution of those problems, the Board will hold a public hearing on **October 27, 1997**, in Washington, D.C.

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The decision announced today addresses a letter dated October 8, 1997, in which the National Industrial Transportation League (NITL) asked the Board to require the Union Pacific Railroad Company/Southern Pacific Transportation Company (UP/SP) to provide, by October 20, 1997, 11 categories of information that reflect the condition of UP/SP's rail service. In a response dated October 14, 1997, UP/SP stated that it intends to file, by October 23, 1997, information in 12 specific categories that would similarly show changes in service quality. UP/SP asserted that its 12 informational categories are designed to serve the same ends as the 11 categories of information suggested by NITL, but that the information that UP/SP intends to provide is more readily available and more directly informative than the information sought by NITL.

The Board, which has already received significant information--formally through the UP/SP "service recovery plan" submitted during the UP/SP merger oversight process, and informally through contacts with shippers and the railroad--expressed its appreciation for the thoughtful suggestions by both NITL and UP/SP. It found that both represented good starting points, but that neither, by itself, would provide all of the information needed to evaluate whether or not UP/SP's actions to resolve its service problems are in fact producing the desired results. Therefore, the Board directed UP/SP to present the 12 categories of information that the carrier had suggested, but also to present an additional 7 categories of information relating specifically to UP/SP's system-wide service recovery plan that the Board found necessary to determine the extent to which overall conditions affecting service are improving. To give other participants in the October 27 hearing an opportunity to review UP/SP's information, the Board directed the carrier to file its weekly reports beginning on October 20, 1997.

The Board's decision was issued today in the case entitled *Rail Service in the Western United States*, STB Ex Parte No. 573.

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