

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

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January 13, 2023

The Honorable Martin J. Oberman
Chairman
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20423

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Dear Chairman Oberman:

As you know, throughout the past several years significant rail service disruptions have had a detrimental impact on the American supply chain. America's farmers, biofuel producers, other grain processors, and grain shippers depend on reliable rail service, and it is critical that they have confidence in Class I railroads to provide access to domestic and international markets to transport their products. We appreciate the positive steps the Surface Transportation Board (STB) has taken throughout the past year to fulfill this objective, including requiring Class I railroads to provide service recovery plans and report performance data.

We write today concerning Union Pacific's December 29, 2022, announcement implementing a 14-day "catastrophic embargo" on rail service throughout the Minnesota, Iowa, and Wisconsin region due to winter weather. On January 11, 2023, Union Pacific announced an extension of the region's embargo for an estimated additional 14 days. The delays resulting from Union Pacific's embargo and subsequent inadequate service for their customers is unacceptable. Current and forecasted weather conditions in the upper Midwest are not abnormal for this time of year, and similar conditions in the past have not significantly disrupted rail service. We have urged Union Pacific to address this as quickly as possible as the embargo will result in increasingly devastating effects on American industry in the upcoming days and weeks if not quickly resolved.

Today, inflation remains at 6.5 percent, and Americans are paying more each day to fill their grocery carts and their gas tanks. We must ensure our farmers, biofuel producers, and manufacturers can rely on critical rail transportation for their products, in-turn ensuring Americans may continue to rely on a safe and affordable domestic food and fuel supply.

We respectfully urge STB to exercise its statutory oversight authority by immediately convening a forum with Union Pacific and affected shippers, directing Union Pacific to lift the ongoing embargo, and expeditiously restoring normal rail service throughout the Minnesota, Iowa, and Wisconsin region before further harm to the supply chain may occur.

We thank you for your continued work on behalf of American industries who rely on rail service to feed and fuel the world and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Brad Finstad
Member of Congress



Michelle Fischbach
Member of Congress



Angie Craig
Member of Congress



Randy Feenstra
Member of Congress



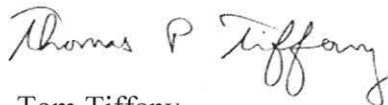
Ashley Hinson
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