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Dr. William Brennan
Director
Office of Economics
U.S. Surface Transportation Board 395 E Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20423

Reference: Request for use of STB "Carload Waybill Sample" for use by MARC in the "Heartland Freight Technology Plan Study."

Dear Dr. Brennan,

The Mid-America Regional Council is leading a multi-state study under FHWA's Megaregions and National Economic Partnerships grant. Called the Heartland Freight Technology Plan, the study is sponsored by consortium of Kansas City, MO Civic Council, seven metropolitan planning agencies (MPOs) and five state Departments of Transportation: Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, and Nebraska. We wish to gain access to portions of the confidential 2018 STB Carload Waybill Sample (CWS) for those five states to advance the study. The data will be used by our consultant WSP USA, who is experienced in the proper handling of the CWS. The reasons justifying this request are as follows:

- **Purpose and Need:** the study researches types of multimodal freight technology our region should be prepared to accommodate through policy, regulation and investment, and the collaborative mechanisms for doing so in a consistent fashion across our territory. The economy and freight transportation patterns of our region establish the functional context for decision making and technology deployment. Railroading is vital in our part of the nation, notably serving the agricultural and food production sectors through which our states support the rest of the country. In addition, much of our territory is rural. We especially need to understand how our food-producing rural areas are served by rail, capturing a granular level of geography and an accurate picture of the national markets and gateways we must reach with today's and tomorrow's technologies. No data source other than the CWS is available to meet this need.
- **Portions of Data:** the essential aspects of the CWS needed to work with are SPLC origins and destinations, carriers and connections, car types and intermodal flags, commodities and volumes. Shipper identities and railroad revenues are not needed and are not part of this request.
- **Public Good:** this request serves the public interest in two ways. First, decisions our study will influence directly affect the nation's export and domestic food supply chains. The advantages of rail service help to maintain the competitiveness of this supply chain and a favorable cost of goods for American

households. Second, our study is intended by FHWA to establish a model for how states should approach and collaborate on multimodal technology and planning. The way that public agencies respond to technology makes a great deal of difference to an ability of technology to realize its economic promise. Informed treatment of advances in rail must be part of the model we establish.

I hope you will look favorably on our request. Please let me know if further details or representations are needed for your decision.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Darryl E. Fields". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Darryl" being more prominent than the last name "Fields".

Darryl E. Fields
Senior Transportation Planner

