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LAKEVILLE LME MOTOR EXPRESS INC

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May 10, 2000

The Honorable Linda Morgan, Chairman
U.S. Surface Transportation Board
1925 K Street, NW, Suite 600
Washington, D.C. 20412

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Office of the Secretary

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RE: Section 5a Application No. 61 (Sub. No. 6)
National Classification Committee Agreement

Dear Chairman Morgan:

My name is James Morse, Director of Pricing for Lakeville Motor Express (LME), located in St. Paul, Minnesota. We are a LTL common carrier operating primarily in the Midwest. I have worked for LME for fifteen and a half years. Our company participates in the NMFC, and has done so for many years. I have been a representative for Lakeville Motor Express serving on the National Classification Committee (NCC) for four years. I am writing to you in an effort to respectfully submit my opinions on the NCC process and to expound on why I support this process.

In the last couple of years there seems to be a strong effort to label the classification process as "unfriendly" to shippers. Worse yet, this organization – which I have found to act in a very professional manner – has been accused of being unprofessional. The unprofessional attack is centered on claims that the decisions are heavily weighted in the carriers' favor, and that the NCC staff unscrupulously gathers data in an effort to support carriers' views. These claims are completely unfounded and couldn't be further from the truth. Although I am fairly new to this process, it has been made very clear to me as to what my role is in serving on the National Classification Committee. And I assure you with complete sincerity that I take this role very seriously.

Our role as NCC members is to review commodities based on their transportability. Specifically, our decisions regarding freight class center around four freight characteristics: density, handling, stowability and liability. The NCC staff receives inquiries regarding specific commodities through either a carrier or shipper inquiry. They gather data about specific commodities through contacting numerous shippers, shippers groups and trade organizations. Once this data is gathered and reviewed, they report their findings back to an NCC panel – in keeping with NCC policies and guidelines. That is, they report on the density, handling, stowability and liability characteristics of the commodities they have been asked to review. Based on the information provided, the panel directs the staff regarding changes to freight class – if any are warranted. Decisions regarding freight class changes can come about as the result of a shipper inquiry or a carrier inquiry – it does not matter. What matters is what are the transportability characteristics of the commodity in question.

Any statement that shippers are not encouraged to participate in this process, or are not welcome at these meetings is completely false. This process needs and encourages shipper involvement.

Respectfully Submitted,

James E. Morse
James E. Morse – Director of Pricing
Lakeville Motor Express

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