



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Railroad
Administration**



August 24, 2020

Mr. Carl Ice
President and Chief Executive Officer
BNSF Railway Company
2650 Lou Menk Drive
Fort Worth, TX 76131

Dear Mr. Ice:

As part of our agencies' ongoing oversight efforts on the effects of the COVID-19 national emergency on the rail industry and service reliability, and following previous correspondence on service preparedness and safety requirements, we write today to reemphasize the importance of safe, dependable rail service as the nation works to restore jobs and promote economic recovery.

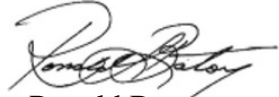
We first want to again recognize the essential work of the freight rail industry, represented by its thousands of hard-working and dedicated employees, delivering critical products vital to public health and welfare. In particular, we commend the rail industry for achieving its precedent-setting safety performance, as reported for the first five months of this year. We also appreciate efforts to provide reliable service and enhanced communication to rail shippers and note that, during formal and informal interactions with stakeholders since the onset of COVID-19, we have received many positive reports from across the country.

Recently, however, we have been made aware of service issues, including missed industrial switches and excessively late or annulled trains due to crew availability issues. As you know, with both increasing intermodal and carload volumes and a projected robust harvest fast approaching, railroad employee availability, together with sufficient equipment resourcing, is essential for safe, fluid rail service in support of the nation's economic recovery. Given the challenges related to changing demand patterns and operating conditions, increased communication and transparency with rail shippers is especially important to ensure they have the information needed to plan their businesses and meet their own customers' needs.

It is our expectation that there will be heightened emphasis on improving employee availability, equipment resources, and robust communication to quickly resolve service issues as they arise and to prevent them from becoming widespread. Again, we commend the rail

industry for its efforts during this challenging time for our nation, and we look forward to continuing to work with you to promote a safe and reliable rail network.

Sincerely,



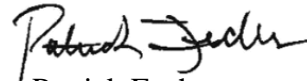
Ronald Batory
Administrator
Federal Railroad Administration



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Chairman
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Surface Transportation Board