UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

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ORAL ARGUMENT

IN THE MATTER OF:

US MAGNESIUM, L.L.C., :

COMPLAINANT, : STB Docket No. 42114

- V. -

UNION PACIFIC RAIL COMPANY, :

DEFENDANT. :

Monday,

November 23, 2009

Surface Transportation

Board

Hearing Room
395 E Street, S.W.

Washington, D.C.

The above-entitled matter came on for hearing, pursuant to notice, at 9:30 a.m.

BEFORE:

DANIEL R. ELLIOTT, III Chairman

CHARLES D. NOTTINGHAM Vice Chairman FRANCIS P. MULVEY Commissioner

APPEARANCES:

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Adjourn

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- 1 P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S
- 2 (9:30 a.m.)
- 3 CHAIR ELLIOTT: Good morning.
- 4 Welcome. Today we will hear oral arguments in
- 5 one proceeding currently pending here at the
- 6 Board. No bomb threats today, so we're going
- 7 off on time. This case today is captioned US
- 8 Magnesium versus Union Pacific Railroad, in
- 9 STB Docket No. NOR 42114.
- In an effort to move things along,
- 11 the Board members will not be making opening
- 12 remarks this morning, but I wanted to cover a
- 13 few procedural matters before we begin.
- 14 We have asked each party to make a
- 15 short statement of their arguments, but
- 16 counsel should be prepared to answer questions
- 17 from the Board at any time during your
- 18 allotted time. I assure you that we have read
- 19 all of your pleadings, and there is no reason
- 20 to repeat every argument.
- 21 Speakers, please note that the
- 22 timing lights are in front of me. You will

- 1 see a yellow light when you have one minute
- 2 remaining and a red light when your time has
- 3 expired. The yellow one-minute light will be
- 4 accompanied by a single chime, and the red
- 5 light signifying that your time has expired
- 6 will be accompanied by two chimes.
- 7 Please keep to the time you have
- 8 been allotted. When you see the red light and
- 9 hear the double chime, please finish your
- 10 thought and take a seat.
- 11 Additionally, just a reminder to
- 12 everyone, please turn off your cell phones.
- 13 That was always a big thing I was nervous
- 14 about when I was in your spot, that that would
- 15 ever happen.
- 16 Counsel for US Magnesium, you have
- 17 been allotted 20 minutes. Please step up to
- 18 the podium, introduce yourself, indicate if
- 19 you have reserved any time for rebuttal, and
- 20 then begin.
- 21 MR. WILCOX: Good morning. My
- 22 name is Thomas Wilcox, for US Magnesium. I

- 1 have elected to reserve seven minutes for
- 2 rebuttal.
- Before I start, I want to let the
- 4 Board know that accompanying me today is Mr.
- 5 Howard Kaplan. He's with us, with US
- 6 Magnesium. He's Vice President of Chemicals
- 7 and Byproducts. He's been with the Company
- 8 for 17 years, on the end of the table there.
- 9 Mr. Kaplan appeared and testified
- in Ex Parte number 677 on the common carrier
- 11 obligation in the transport of hazardous
- 12 materials.
- 13 USM is one of many unhappy TIH
- 14 shippers that the Board has heard from in the
- 15 past few years. The Board has heard from
- 16 several more, or in fact three trade
- 17 associations in this proceeding, as well,
- 18 regarding the railroads' practices regarding
- 19 TIH commodities.
- 20 But USM has taken the additional
- 21 step of coming to the STB and seeking formal
- 22 rate relief. It's the type of small shipper

- 1 that we think the rules were adopted to
- 2 protect, clearly captive to UP, relatively low
- 3 volume, low revenue.
- 4 It's also a shipper of a commodity
- 5 that UP has publicly stated it no longer wants
- 6 to carry and it's pricing accordingly. And
- 7 USM's rates have skyrocketed in the past three
- 8 years.
- 9 USM is seeking relief in this case
- 10 under the three-benchmark case, three-
- 11 benchmark methodology, but believes the facts
- 12 and circumstances fully justify raising the
- 13 damage limit to \$2 million in this case.
- 14 There's an extensive record in the
- 15 case. I am going to basically address three
- 16 points, emphasize three points. The first one
- 17 is that USM believes that our final offer
- 18 chlorine TIH commodity comparison group fully
- 19 complies with the Simplified Standards and
- 20 what the Board did in the DuPont case in terms
- 21 of adopting a composite chlorine and TIH
- 22 shipment commodity group.

- 1 We believe that our commodity --
- 2 or, excuse me, comparison groups are most
- 3 similar in the aggregate to the issue
- 4 movements, and we've shown that in this case
- 5 the TIH and chlorine movements, as in DuPont,
- 6 have the same operating characteristics and
- 7 the same transportation demand characteristics
- 8 other -- other TIH community shipments have
- 9 the same characteristics as chlorine.
- 10 And we don't believe there's any
- 11 reason to depart from DuPont, words in the
- 12 DuPont, in terms of adopting composite
- 13 comparison groups over a chlorine-only
- 14 comparison group.
- The second point is that UP's
- 16 chlorine-only comp group is not comparable.
- 17 And we've cited lots of reasons in the record
- 18 why this is not the case. But in this
- 19 argument I'd like to emphasize one primary
- 20 reason, which is the re-billed movements,
- 21 which UP has characterized in their rebuttal
- 22 as a minor costing issue but we believe is far

- 1 from that.
- 2 And I guess at this point I have
- 3 an oral argument exhibit, but I couldn't tell
- 4 whether -- is the Board accepting those in
- 5 this proceeding? Basically summarizing the
- 6 data already in the record.
- 7 VICE CHAIR NOTTINGHAM: Hopefully
- 8 not if it's chlorine and it's raw.
- 9 CHAIR ELLIOTT: Sure.
- 10 MR. WILCOX: As we've discussed in
- 11 the evidence, re-billed movements are by
- 12 definition not exactly comparable to the issue
- 13 movements, because they are part of an overall
- 14 movement. The issue movements are single-line,
- 15 UP origin-to-destination movements.
- They're about 1,300 miles long,
- 17 and UP handles the traffic all the way, from
- 18 origin all the way to destination. Re-billed
- 19 movements are part of the movement. It's
- 20 where UP receives the materials at an
- 21 interchange point and then issues another bill
- 22 for the commodity and then, or for the

STB Docket No. 42114, US Magnesium, LLC v. Union Pacific Railroad Company

Highly Confidential Subject to Protective Order [REDACTED]

Impact of Rebilled Movements Union Pacific **USM** 10 Single 14 Rebilled Line Movements 1/ Eloy 2/ Movements 1/ Sahaurita 3/ Avg. Distance 1,191 (Miles) 1,138 1,339 1,145 Avg. Revenue/Car 4/ } } } Avg. VC/Car 5/ { } .} } } 337% WTD Avg. R/VC 214% 215% 211% R/VCCOMP 475% 301% 304% 298% Upper Boundary 502% 327% 311% 302% { } = Highly confidential Subject to Protective Order Source 1/ UP Workpaper "UP Comparison Group at 300 and 200 Miles - Reply.xls" and USM Workpaper "UP Comp Group Analysis.xls" 2/ Hillenbrand Reply Exhibit___(KNH-14) 3/ Hillenbrand Reply Exhibit__(KNH-15) 4/ Total Exp. Revenue (Col. 14) ÷ Total Exp. Carloads (Col. 12) 5/ Total Exp. Var. Cost (Col. 15) ÷ Total Exp. Carloads (Col. 12)

- 1 transportation and submits it and delivers it
- 2 to the destination.
- Fourteen of UP's 24 movements in
- 4 their comparison group -- they characterize it
- 5 as two comparison groups but it's really one
- 6 group of chlorine-only shipments -- 14 of
- 7 those are re-billed movements, and we have
- 8 cited in the evidence how including the re-
- 9 billed movements skews the result in favor --
- 10 well, it skews the result because the re-
- 11 billed movements have a higher revenue to
- 12 variable cost ratio.
- 13 And in our rebuttal evidence we
- 14 show how if you remove the re-billed movements
- 15 how the remaining chlorine-only movements in
- 16 UP's group, how that RVC ratio drops fairly
- 17 close to what USM's comparison groups produced
- 18 under the three-benchmark methodology.
- 19 The re-billed movements in this
- 20 case is actually the -- I think it's the first
- 21 time the Board has looked at re-billed
- 22 movements in a three-benchmark case. We do

- 1 not believe they were an issue in DuPont.
- Now, as we said in our evidence,
- 3 we've cited how the variable costs are very
- 4 different for a re-billed movement, and that's
- 5 a combination of factors. The variable costs
- 6 are lower, and UP, in their evidence, said you
- 7 can include re-billed movements because
- 8 they're lower variable cost, but that, because
- 9 under Simplified Standards, you can have
- 10 movements that have different cost
- 11 characteristics and lower cost, but it's
- 12 presumed that the rates will come down and the
- 13 margins will stay the same.
- 14 But that's not what happened with
- 15 the re-billed movements in this case. The
- 16 combination of higher revenues and lower
- 17 variable cost have resulted in the left column
- 18 over here, where you -- and the reason I'm
- 19 speaking generally is that, as you can see,
- 20 the issue -- the exhibit contains highly
- 21 confidential information on revenues and
- 22 costs, and so I can always -- I can't cite the

- 1 exact numbers, but you can see that for the
- 2 re-billed movements, when you take, as the
- 3 references down below, if you take the
- 4 evidence in the record in terms of aggregate
- 5 revenues, aggregate variable costs that are in
- 6 the parties' work papers and in the evidence
- 7 and you reduce it to a per car level, you can
- 8 see what, in more precise, what we were
- 9 getting to in our evidence, that the actual
- 10 revenues for the re-billed movements are a lot
- 11 higher.
- 12 And so the margin, the markup, is
- 13 actually much higher on the re-billed
- 14 movements than they are for the remaining
- 15 lines. And so it shows that -- it shows a
- 16 couple of things, that the UP comp group has -
- 17 is not comparable to the issue movements,
- 18 and it also shows that our movements with the
- 19 combined chlorine-TIH movements are more
- 20 comparable when you look at the 10 single-line
- 21 remaining chlorine movements.
- They're a lot closer, which shows

- 1 that we are correct that the TIH other than
- 2 chlorine movements have the same -- roughly
- 3 the same demand characteristics,
- 4 transportation demand characteristics, as
- 5 chlorine.
- 6 The third point I wanted to raise
- 7 in my opening remarks is on PTC, UP's request
- 8 to have basically their estimated investment
- 9 in PTC folded into -- some of that investment
- 10 folded into USM's rates. That claim is based
- on, in our view, three false premises.
- 12 The first one is that the large
- increases in chlorine and TIH rates in the
- 14 recent years, as UP said in their evidence,
- 15 was due to some sort of understanding between
- 16 rail shippers and the UP that their rates
- 17 would be increased to reflect their
- 18 understating of PTC costs.
- 19 We believe we've countered that in
- 20 our evidence to show that wasn't the case and
- 21 also the amici associations have also refuted
- 22 UP's claim that there was some sort of

- 1 understanding that these rate increases were
- 2 due directly to PTC. And even UP, in their
- 3 rebuttal at 40, says that their ramp-up in
- 4 rates over the past few years is not solely
- 5 due to PTC, and they say it's not even the
- 6 primary reason.
- 7 The second premise is that the
- 8 amount UP will pay for PTC can be presently
- 9 accurately quantified. And we've cited many
- 10 examples and evidence saying that, or
- 11 countering the fact that it is certain,
- 12 because we believe it's very uncertain what
- 13 costs UP will pay for PTC at the end of the
- 14 day, where it's going to be installed on their
- 15 system, the extent to which there'll be public
- 16 funding for PTC versus UP paying for it all
- 17 itself.
- 18 You have the AAR making a
- 19 statutory challenge to the FRA's rules, saying
- 20 that, counter to what the FRA has, how the FRA
- 21 has interpreted the statute, it's not where
- 22 the TIH and passenger traffic is in 2008. It

- 1 should be where it is in 2015, which leaves
- 2 many years for the UP and other railroads to -
- 3 yes, sir?
- 4 COMMISSIONER MULVEY: I was going
- 5 to say, if, indeed, the FRA can determine what
- 6 PTC costs are actually going to be and what
- 7 share of those costs is legitimately the
- 8 result of moving TIH as opposed to passenger
- 9 traffic, would you agree that at that point US
- 10 Magnesium and other TIH shippers should bear
- 11 that part of the cost?
- MR. WILCOX: Well, USM is not --
- 13 they've borne costs for safety at their plants
- 14 and -- I think the issue, one of the biggest
- 15 issues for PTC is who is going to pay for it,
- 16 the extent to which there's going to be public
- 17 funding.
- 18 You have the -- the FRA issued its
- 19 national transportation plan right around the
- 20 time we were submitting rebuttal evidence, and
- 21 that cites a recent statute where there is now
- 22 going to be federal and passenger partnerships

- 1 where there'll be more passenger traffic on
- 2 freight lines and vice versa.
- 3 So the lines of where passenger
- 4 and TIH and freight traffic, other freight
- 5 traffic are going to be operated on are
- 6 starting to become even more blurred, we
- 7 believe.
- 8 And UP has in its evidence, they
- 9 had initial estimate of \$1.4 billion, and they
- 10 said, well, even if we drop it to \$1 billion,
- 11 that leaves a lot of money to be accounted
- 12 for.
- But we don't believe it's beyond
- 14 the realm of possibility that number could go
- 15 to zero. There's a lot of money being
- 16 allocated for the government paying for things
- 17 these days, and \$1.4 or \$1 billion is not a
- 18 lot of money these days.
- 19 The third premise, just very
- 20 quickly, is that UP won't recover any of USM's
- 21 share of the future PTC costs -- excuse me, UP
- 22 won't recover any of the future costs in the

- 1 rate prescription process. We've shown that
- 2 under the Board's procedures there will be
- 3 cost recovery, and there is a lag, but the
- 4 variable costs will be recovered.
- 5 UP's statement that it will not be
- 6 able to recover any of its fixed costs or any
- 7 of its non-capital costs under the Board's
- 8 prescription period just ignores the fact that
- 9 even under our analysis those rates will be
- 10 over 300 percent around -- depending on which
- 11 movement, around 300 percent of their variable
- 12 cost, which leaves quite a bit of money for
- investment or whatever UP wants to do with it.
- 14 Thank you.
- 15 CHAIR ELLIOTT: Thank you.
- 16 Counsel for Union Pacific, you
- 17 have been allotted 20 minutes.
- 18 MR. ROSENTHAL: Thank you, and
- 19 good morning, Chairman Elliott, Vice Chairman
- 20 Nottingham, Commissioner Mulvey. My name is
- 21 Michael Rosenthal, and I'm representing Union
- 22 Pacific Railroad.

- Joining me at counsel's table is
- 2 Louise Rinn, Union Pacific's Associate General
- 3 Counsel. And I'd like also to introduce Bob
- 4 Worrell, Union Pacific's Senior Assistant Vice
- 5 President, Chemicals, and Michael Hemmer,
- 6 Union Pacific's Senior Vice President, Law,
- 7 and General Counsel, who are in the audience
- 8 today.
- 9 Union Pacific's evidence in this
- 10 proceeding reflects a straightforward
- 11 application of the three-benchmark methodology
- 12 that the Board adopted in its Simplified
- 13 Standards decision.
- 14 Union Pacific is simply asking the
- 15 Board to evaluate its evidence under the rules
- 16 adopted in Simplified Standards, and if it
- 17 does, the Board will conclude that the
- 18 challenged rates are reasonable.
- 19 To apply the three-benchmark
- 20 method in this case, Union Pacific first
- 21 developed comparison groups for the issue
- 22 traffic, movements of chlorine from Rowley,

- 1 Utah to Sahuarita and Eloy, Arizona, by
- 2 identifying other chlorine traffic with cost
- 3 characteristics similar to those of the issue
- 4 traffic.
- 5 Then, as contemplated by the
- 6 Board's methodology, UP submitted evidence to
- 7 demonstrate that the maximum lawful rates
- 8 should be higher than the presumed maximum
- 9 rates to account for two other relevant
- 10 factors: Union Pacific's obligation to
- install positive train control, or PTC; and
- 12 the fact that all of the other traffic in the
- 13 comparison groups moved under contract rates
- 14 rather than common carrier rates.
- US Magnesium, on the other hand,
- 16 misapplied the three-benchmark methodology.
- 17 US Magnesium did not limit its comparison
- 18 groups to chlorine traffic. Instead, its
- 19 comparison groups consist almost entirely of
- 20 movements of commodities other than chlorine.
- 21 Chlorine is only 1 percent of US
- 22 Magnesium's comparison group for the

- 1 challenged rate to Sahuarita and just 4
- 2 percent for the challenged rate to Eloy. As
- 3 a result, if the Board selected USM's
- 4 comparison groups, the reasonableness of the
- 5 challenged rates would be based almost
- 6 entirely on the demand characteristics and
- 7 cost characteristics of transportation of
- 8 commodity other than chlorine.
- 9 CHAIR ELLIOTT: Mr. Rosenthal,
- 10 with respect to the analysis of the demand
- 11 characteristics, it seems that US Magnesium is
- 12 looking more at the transportation
- 13 characteristics and that you are looking more,
- 14 as they put it in their brief, the end use
- 15 characteristics.
- 16 How do you respond to their
- 17 argument with respect to that issue? Is that
- 18 the way you perceive these guidelines to work
- 19 is that you should look at the transportation
- 20 or the end use?
- 21 MR. ROSENTHAL: I think both are
- 22 relevant. The three-benchmark methodology is

- 1 designed to identify the appropriate amount of
- 2 demand-based differential pricing for the
- 3 comparison for the issue traffic. It's
- 4 designed to identify the appropriate level of
- 5 contribution to joint and common cost for the
- 6 issue movements.
- 7 And the three-benchmark
- 8 methodology does this by looking at the
- 9 markups collected on traffic with demand
- 10 characteristics that are comparable to the
- 11 issue traffic, that is, movements of a similar
- 12 commodity under similar circumstances, to
- 13 determine the reasonableness of the markups
- 14 for issue traffic.
- 15 So the question in this case
- 16 becomes, what traffic is sufficiently similar
- 17 to US Magnesium's chlorine traffic to reflect
- 18 reasonable markups?
- 19 And our answer is chlorine
- 20 traffic, because the factors that affect the
- 21 markups that Union Pacific can charge are
- 22 different for chlorine traffic and other

- 1 traffic. Demand for chlorine is subject to
- 2 different market forces than demand for the
- 3 other TIH commodities in US Magnesium's
- 4 comparison groups.
- 5 Chlorine and other TIH commodities
- 6 have different risk profiles and different
- 7 risks associated with their transportation.
- 8 Chlorine is less susceptible to transportation
- 9 by other modes, and chlorine is less
- 10 susceptible to product substitution.
- 11 And, again, all of these factors
- 12 are what play into the markups Union Pacific
- 13 can charge for chlorine, and they explain why
- 14 the markups charged for other commodities
- 15 would not provide meaningful information about
- 16 the markups that should be charged for
- 17 chlorine traffic. Now --
- 18 CHAIR ELLIOTT: Mr. Rosenthal, how
- 19 do you respond to their de-marketing claim
- 20 that -- I noted in the beginning of their
- 21 brief they claim that the rates have
- 22 increased, doubled from last year to this year

- 1 on this subject line. How do you respond to
- 2 that?
- 3 MR. ROSENTHAL: The de-marketing
- 4 issue has obviously been litigated extensively
- 5 in this case, mostly because what US Magnesium
- 6 is trying to do is trying to bring this case
- 7 into the framework of the DuPont case, where
- 8 the Board said that it was using a comparison
- 9 group based on all TIH traffic because DuPont
- 10 had admitted that it was pricing chlorine at
- 11 levels that were not commercially justifiable.
- 12 And so we certainly address that issue in this
- 13 case.
- 14 And the evidence shows that this
- 15 case is nothing like the DuPont case. First,
- 16 the evidence shows that Union Pacific is not
- 17 de-marketing chlorine. Union Pacific has
- 18 entered into contracts with every chlorine
- 19 shipper other than US Magnesium.
- 20 We have voluntary contracts. The
- 21 traffic is moving under rates that are
- 22 comparable to the rates that we're arguing

- 1 about in this proceeding, that we're trying to
- 2 charge US Magnesium.
- 3 US Magnesium's own expert witness
- 4 described UP's pricing as an effort to
- 5 maximize profits, which is what the Board said
- 6 in the DuPont case that railroads should be
- 7 doing.
- 8 Dr. Kaplan testified for US
- 9 Magnesium that Union Pacific's rates have been
- 10 generally reasonable and fair prior to 2008,
- 11 which is inconsistent with US Magnesium's
- 12 current claim that we've been trying to de-
- 13 market chlorine since 2005.
- 14 CHAIR ELLIOTT: Have you seen any
- 15 type of decrease in movements with respect to
- 16 chlorine traffic?
- 17 MR. ROSENTHAL: We had Dr. Marius
- 18 Schwartz, Professor of Economics at Georgetown
- 19 University, analyze Union Pacific's waybill
- 20 data and look at exactly that, look at the
- 21 pattern of movements and variable costs in
- 22 revenues. And he concluded that Union

- 1 Pacific's pricing is consistent with the
- 2 pursuit of greater profit rather than driving
- 3 away TIH traffic.
- 4 And we had Mr. Worrell testify for
- 5 Union Pacific that the rates for chlorine and
- 6 other TIH commodities reflect Union Pacific's
- 7 assessment of market-level rates.
- 8 And so when you look at the
- 9 evidence in this case, when you look at the
- 10 evidence from our testimony, to their experts,
- 11 to their witnesses, to the waybill sample
- 12 data, none of the evidence supports the claim
- 13 that we're de-marketing chlorine.
- 14 CHAIR ELLIOTT: So you're saying
- 15 there has not been a decrease in the number of
- 16 movements? The economy's had an effect, but -
- 17 -
- 18 MR. ROSENTHAL: When you look at
- 19 the pattern of chlorine movements over time,
- 20 you do see in some periods some decrease as
- 21 rates have increased, but that's entirely
- 22 consistent with maximizing profits.

- 1 That's what companies do. They
- 2 raise price. Sometimes quantity goes down.
- 3 But as long as the contribution is going up,
- 4 as long as the contribution they're receiving
- 5 from this traffic is going up, that's not
- 6 driving traffic off the system. That's not
- 7 pricing irrationally or pricing at levels that
- 8 aren't commercially justifiable.
- 9 That's what companies are supposed
- 10 to do to maximize profits. So we entirely
- 11 reject claims that Union Pacific is somehow
- 12 pricing to de-market. The evidence shows that
- 13 Union Pacific is pricing chlorine in a
- 14 commercially justifiable manner.
- Now, US Magnesium has come up with
- 16 -- has tried to argue in other ways that our
- 17 comparison groups are not appropriate for this
- 18 case. They've argued that the comparison
- 19 groups are too small, but our evidence shows
- 20 that they're similar in size to some of the
- 21 comparison groups that the Board used in the
- 22 DuPont case.

- 1 They're larger than the 23
- 2 movements that were used to evaluate the
- 3 nitrobenzene movements. They're about the
- 4 size of the 28-movement group that was used in
- 5 one of the chlorine cases involving the
- 6 movement of chlorine to Niagara Falls.
- 7 US Magnesium also claimed at some
- 8 point in its arguments that the DuPont case
- 9 somehow compelled the use of chlorine-only
- 10 comparison groups. But I think we showed from
- 11 the Board's own brief to the District of
- 12 Columbia Court of Appeals that the Board at
- 13 least told the D.C. Circuit that it was
- 14 willing to accept a chlorine-only comparison
- 15 group.
- 16 And then, finally, US Magnesium
- 17 has tried to argue that, well, Union Pacific
- 18 treats chlorine the same as TIH in that we're
- 19 trying to de-market it all. We're trying to
- 20 treat it as having the same demand elasticity.
- 21 So therefore the Board should look at markups
- 22 on all of this traffic as the same.

- 1 But, as I just explained, it's
- 2 clearly not the case. It's clearly not the
- 3 case that we're trying to de-market these
- 4 commodities. The testimony in this case is
- 5 that we're not pricing them the same. We're
- 6 looking at each commodity and each movement
- 7 depending on its particular characteristics
- 8 and setting market-level rates.
- 9 And we've provided in our rebuttal
- 10 a look at the waybill sample data over the
- 11 years that shows a clear difference in markups
- 12 between chlorine and other TIH that shows
- there's a constantly higher markup for
- 14 chlorine. It's not as though we're treating
- 15 them as having the same demand elasticity.
- 16 CHAIR ELLIOTT: How do you respond
- 17 to Mr. Wilcox's argument regarding the re-bill
- 18 issue in his exhibit?
- 19 MR. ROSENTHAL: There are two
- 20 issues that the Board is looking at, I think,
- 21 when it's asking about the most appropriate
- 22 comparison group. There's the demand side and

- 1 there's the cost side.
- 2 And US Magnesium argued that its
- 3 comparison groups are superior because its
- 4 costs are more similar to those of the issue
- 5 traffic, and they criticized the re-bills,
- 6 they criticized our 400-mile range. We used
- 7 a 400-mile range from which to draw comparable
- 8 movements.
- 9 But the evidence when you do the
- 10 costing shows that the traffic in Union
- 11 Pacific's comparison groups has a narrower
- 12 range of cost characteristics than the traffic
- in USM's groups, and that the average cost of
- 14 the traffic moving in Union Pacific's
- 15 comparison groups is more similar to the issue
- 16 traffic than the costs of US Magnesium's.
- Now, US Magnesium's decision to
- 18 include non-chlorine traffic in its comparison
- 19 groups, we feel, is much more significant,
- 20 much more significant than Union Pacific's
- 21 decision to include re-billed movements or
- 22 movements with a longer range.

- 1 And, as the Board explained in
- 2 Simplified Standards, movements with different
- 3 cost characteristics may be included in the
- 4 comparison group, because the key issue is
- 5 markup. The key issue is not the actual level
- 6 of cost, but the markup over the cost that the
- 7 railroad is charging.
- 8 In other words, a chlorine
- 9 movement with lower variable costs may have a
- 10 lower rate than a chlorine movement with
- 11 higher costs, but there's no reason to expect
- 12 the markups to be different.
- In this case, though, the Board
- 14 doesn't have to choose between movements --
- 15 between the comparison group with the closer
- 16 cost characteristics and the closer demand
- 17 characteristics. UP's comparison groups are
- 18 superior in both dimensions.
- 19 On reply, US Magnesium presented a
- 20 series of calculations in which it tried to
- 21 show that, again, UP's comparison groups had
- 22 a wider range of cost variations. But its

- 1 calculations depended on a good number of
- 2 assumptions that ignored the actual
- 3 characteristics of the movements.
- 4 And when those assumptions are
- 5 replaced with actual data, which is what Union
- 6 Pacific did in its rebuttal testimony, then
- 7 you see the answer that we got, that our
- 8 comparable groups have a narrower range of
- 9 differences and are, on average, more similar
- 10 in cost to the issue traffic.
- Now, there's also a demand side at
- 12 least hinted at issue with respect to the re-
- 13 billed movements, but it's not really
- 14 developed in any of US Magnesium's evidence.
- 15 It's hinted at in their rebuttal testimony
- 16 that perhaps there's something different in
- 17 the nature of these re-billed movements that
- 18 we should be concerned about.
- 19 But we would submit that we have
- 20 demonstrated that there is a real reason to be
- 21 concerned on the demand side about the
- 22 difference between chlorine traffic and all of

- 1 the other non-chlorine traffic that US
- 2 Magnesium included in its comparison groups.
- 3 That's where there's some real evidence of a
- 4 demand side difference.
- 5 With regard to re-billed
- 6 movements, US Magnesium doesn't even hint what
- 7 that might be. Why is there any reason to
- 8 believe that the markups on re-billed
- 9 movements should be different than the markups
- 10 on the other movements? There's no reason
- 11 that US Magnesium has given to dismiss the
- 12 evidence that's provided by these other
- 13 movements of chlorine.
- 14 COMMISSIONER MULVEY: We don't
- 15 have a lot of experience in the small rate
- 16 case approach so far, but we do have the
- 17 DuPont cases. Were there any re-billed
- 18 movements in the Dupont case?
- 19 MR. ROSENTHAL: I believe -- I do
- 20 not know the answer to that. I don't know
- 21 whether the data are even publicly available
- 22 that would let me know the answer to that.

- 1 But, again, the Board's theory of looking at
- 2 demand-based pricing and markups says, "Let's
- 3 look at the commodities with the demand
- 4 characteristics that are the same."
- 5 And in that type of analysis,
- 6 again, cost is less significant. It's
- 7 important as a baseline for measuring the
- 8 markups. But what the Board said, one of the
- 9 Board's examples was that you could use
- 10 multiple-car movements in rates involving unit
- 11 trains.
- 12 Well, if you look at the factors
- 13 that are applied on the cost side between
- 14 multiple-car movements and unit trains,
- 15 they're much more significant than the factors
- 16 here, the difference between a re-billed
- 17 movement, where you're treating one end as an
- 18 interchange rather than a termination.
- 19 If you look at that compared to
- 20 the discount on termination charges for unit-
- 21 train movements and multiple-train movements,
- 22 and the other factors that come into play when

- 1 you're using unit-train movements and
- 2 multiple-train movements, the cost differences
- 3 here are less significant than the example
- 4 that the Board gave.
- 5 COMMISSIONER MULVEY: Well, the
- 6 example that was submitted a few moments ago
- 7 by USM suggests that using re-billed movements
- 8 generates a pretty substantial cost
- 9 difference. Do you have any evidence to
- 10 suggest that some of the other things that you
- 11 mentioned are at least this large?
- MR. ROSENTHAL: Well, again, I
- 13 think you have to -- I was just given this
- 14 exhibit when you were, so I haven't had a
- 15 chance to look at it, but looking at the cost
- 16 differences, again, those should not be
- 17 relevant under the Board's methodology.
- 18 If you trust your URCS costing
- 19 system, you're looking at the markups over
- 20 those costs. And even if you don't trust
- 21 URCS, there's a reason, I mean, there's
- 22 certainly a reason why you would prefer a

- 1 comparable group that is more similar in terms
- 2 of cost characteristics.
- But if it's a choice between that,
- 4 if it's a choice between re-billed movements
- 5 with some cost characteristics that might be
- 6 slightly different and a comparison group
- 7 that's comprised 99 percent or 96 percent of
- 8 non-chlorine traffic, where should you be more
- 9 concerned that you're not reflecting the
- 10 demand characteristics? I submit it's the
- 11 comparison group that has hardly any chlorine,
- 12 not the fact that you've got some re-billed
- 13 movements in there.
- 14 COMMISSIONER MULVEY: This does get
- 15 to the comparability of movements. I guess
- 16 anhydrous ammonia is what we're really talking
- 17 about as a large part of the comparison group
- 18 traffic that's in USM's case.
- 19 You say the demands are different,
- 20 but in terms of the transportation demand,
- 21 both of them are highly, highly inelastic, up
- 22 to a point that it's sort of an all-or-nothing

- 1 demand curve. You really don't have any
- 2 alternatives.
- 3 You were suggesting that there are
- 4 reasonable alternatives for moving anhydrous
- 5 ammonia. The anhydrous ammonia that, in fact,
- 6 moves by rail, (I know much of it does move by
- 7 barge and by pipeline,) but the question is
- 8 what's moving by rail, does that really have
- 9 a non-rail alternative when it has to move?
- 10 MR. ROSENTHAL: I mean, first of
- 11 all, when you're looking at the transportation
- 12 demand characteristics, we had Dr. Schwartz
- 13 testify about this in our rebuttal testimony,
- 14 the demand for -- shipper's demand for
- 15 transportation is derived from demand for its
- 16 product.
- 17 And certainly the shipper's demand
- 18 for its product depends on more than just the
- 19 strict transportation characteristics of the
- 20 commodity. And so the same way that a
- 21 shipper's markup depends on more than just the
- 22 transportation characteristics of the product,

- 1 a railroad's markup is going to depend on more
- 2 than just the transportation demand.
- And so it's not just a question of
- 4 can this be transported, when you're looking
- 5 at the transportation demand and the demand
- 6 for transportation. It's not just a question
- 7 of can it be transported some other way.
- 8 It's directly affected by the
- 9 demand for the product, which is, again, why
- 10 we chose chlorine rather than something with
- 11 all other comparison groups. And Dr. Schwartz
- 12 goes through all the various Marshall-Hicks-
- 13 Allen factors that affect the derived demand
- 14 for transportation.
- 15 And certainly the alternative
- 16 transportation sources is one of them. But
- it's one of them, and the others depend, and
- 18 this one also depends on the nature of the
- 19 product, not just the nature of the
- 20 transportation.
- 21 COMMISSIONER MULVEY: Well, you
- 22 make a good point in the sense that the

- 1 anhydrous ammonia does have alternatives, and
- 2 that you can use anhydrous ammonia as a
- 3 fertilizer or there are other substitutes.
- But now we have, in the case of
- 5 chlorine, one of its major uses, the use of
- 6 household bleach, etc., the Clorox company has
- 7 said that it is going to no longer use
- 8 chlorine, it's going to no longer ship
- 9 chlorine, it's going to come up with a
- 10 substitute.
- 11 So don't we have chlorine also
- 12 becoming much more like anhydrous ammonia in
- 13 becoming a product that has substitutes, and
- 14 therefore the demand for the product having
- 15 more of the same characteristics as anhydrous
- 16 ammonia?
- 17 MR. ROSENTHAL: Well, I don't
- 18 think so. I mean, I think what we're seeing
- 19 with respect to Clorox is that, as you point,
- 20 companies are recognizing the risks and costs
- 21 associated with transporting these products,
- 22 and I'm not sure the way this day is going I'm

- 1 going to have time to talk too much about PTC,
- 2 which is what we're trying to do, but, no, I
- 3 mean, again, I think you have to look much
- 4 beyond simply the transportation
- 5 characteristics of the product.
- 6 That's the whole point of the
- 7 Board's three-benchmark methodology of looking
- 8 at markups and what markups the railroad can
- 9 charge and allowing demand-based differential
- 10 pricing.
- 11 And demand-based differential
- 12 pricing, which is necessary for railroads to
- 13 recover their cost, depends not just on the
- 14 particular product. Just because you have
- 15 captive coal doesn't mean you should be
- 16 pricing it at the same level as captive
- 17 chlorine or captive ammonia.
- 18 Where do all these products fall
- 19 within that range? It's too difficult to
- 20 tell. And it's not just products. You would
- 21 have to think about the particular geographic
- 22 competition. As you point out, there are

- 1 different movements that are subject to
- 2 different forces, depending on where they are.
- 3 But that analysis is just too
- 4 complicated, and that's what the Board
- 5 recognized by going to something like the
- 6 three-benchmark methodology. To actually
- 7 figure out what the proper level of demand-
- 8 based differential pricing is is just too
- 9 complicated.
- 10 So what you can do is you can
- 11 choose products with similar demand
- 12 characteristics, products that you believe
- 13 should be the same based on the key factors,
- 14 adjust as you can for costs, and, again, even
- 15 setting aside this question of -- well, even
- 16 with this question, not setting it aside, even
- 17 with the re-bills, even with the larger
- 18 mileage range, Union Pacific's comparison
- 19 groups are more similar in terms of cost, more
- 20 similar in terms of costs, more similar in
- 21 terms of demand characteristics. They should
- 22 be the ones that you've accepted.

- 1 VICE CHAIR NOTTINGHAM: Mr.
- 2 Rosenthal, how do you respond to the argument
- 3 that if a railroad were to select a comparison
- 4 group that arguably was quite narrow and
- 5 systemically decided to game this process by
- 6 pricing all of their customers in that market,
- 7 for example all chlorine customers, 500-plus
- 8 percent is the ratios we're looking at in this
- 9 case, I believe, rather than just do variable
- 10 costs, and then you get challenged in a case
- 11 and you say, "Well, look, it's very
- 12 comparable. All our customers are paying 500-
- 13 plus percent. There's not a problem here."
- 14 How do you respond to that argument?
- 15 MR. ROSENTHAL: Well, first, the
- 16 gaming allegation has been directly made in
- 17 this case, and I think the facts completely
- 18 refute the gaming allegation. I won't go
- 19 through them again because I have very limited
- 20 time, but the facts completely refute them.
- 21 Second, the facts in this case
- 22 show that the rates are in contracts, and

- 1 they're negotiated, presumably commercially
- 2 justifiable rates if they're in contracts.
- 3 So, again, I think it's very difficult to say
- 4 that rates like that have been gamed.
- 5 And, finally, this is how the
- 6 three-benchmark methodology works is you're
- 7 comparing it to other rates that are in the
- 8 marketplace. And the Board has other
- 9 methodologies if they believe -- if shippers,
- 10 who have pushed for this three-benchmark
- 11 methodology, if the shippers believe that it
- 12 doesn't work, there are other alternative ways
- 13 to dealing with these issues.
- 14 CHAIR ELLIOTT: Mr. Rosenthal, why
- don't we give you a few extra minutes here?
- 16 We didn't get into the PTC matter, which
- 17 obviously is a very important issue. And if
- 18 you could kind of be very specific with
- 19 respect to some of Mr. Wilcox's statements,
- 20 especially with respect to has there been any
- 21 capital allotted for these specific lines,
- 22 along those lines, and also with respect to

- 1 his statements that is it possible that the
- 2 return on investment with respect to PTC can
- 3 be employed to other customers, not just the
- 4 chlorine shippers.
- 5 MR. ROSENTHAL: Sure. And I'll
- 6 try to make this very quick, and please
- 7 interrupt me with questions if I'm straying.
- 8 But the problem that we were trying to address
- 9 with the PTC adjustment is that the rates, the
- 10 maximum rates in this case, the presumed
- 11 maximum rates, are based on rates that were
- out in the marketplace between 2004 and 2007,
- and that's what we're looking at to figure out
- 14 what the appropriate markup should be. And
- 15 the marketplace has changed substantially
- 16 since then.
- 17 And US Magnesium says chlorine
- 18 rates and TIH rates have increased, have
- 19 surged or whatever term they used, and our
- 20 answer is, yes, that's the problem. The
- 21 problem is if you're comparing rates that
- 22 exist today to rates that exist then they're

- 1 going to look different, and if you use
- 2 markups that existed back then to determine
- 3 the rates that Union Pacific can charge today,
- 4 they're not going to appropriately reflect the
- 5 rates that are in the marketplace today.
- 6 Now, to the question of whether
- 7 Union Pacific is spending money, is there
- 8 capital going into it, the answer is our
- 9 evidence shows that it's going to be
- 10 approximately \$1.4 billion to install PTC by
- 11 the end of 2015.
- 12 But Union Pacific is certainly
- 13 working now to meet that deadline. It spent
- 14 tens of millions of dollars this year, and
- it's going to spend hundreds of millions of
- 16 dollars more in the next several years to meet
- 17 that deadline. So money is being spent.
- 18 And there may be questions about
- 19 what the ultimate final cost will be for PTC,
- 20 but Union Pacific developed its adjustment
- 21 using very conservative, very conservative
- 22 measures. We did not --

- 1 CHAIR ELLIOTT: Is there any
- 2 specific cost allocated with respect to these
- 3 movements that you're aware of?
- 4 MR. ROSENTHAL: I don't think
- 5 there has been -- as far as I know there has
- 6 not been budgeting on a -- the costs that we
- 7 presented in our evidence were developed
- 8 looking at a line-by-line breakdown of what is
- 9 Union Pacific going to have to do to comply
- 10 with the particular rules.
- 11 And certainly a lot of the money
- 12 that Union Pacific has been spending so far
- 13 has gone into the sort of preparation work
- that's going to be necessary to deploy PTC
- 15 across its entire system.
- Now, whether somebody has been out
- 17 on the particular line or spur used for this
- 18 particular movement, I don't know. But the
- 19 types of costs that are being incurred right
- 20 now are the startup costs that should be
- 21 equally applicable to everybody who's going to
- 22 benefit from PTC.

- 1 COMMISSIONER MULVEY: Are you
- 2 basing the estimate of PTC costs on making PTC
- 3 compliant with the entire system, or only
- 4 those parts of the system that carry passenger
- 5 traffic and also carry TIH traffic, which I
- 6 believe is what the law requires?
- 7 MR. ROSENTHAL: The estimates that
- 8 we developed were based on what the law
- 9 required and what, at the time the estimates
- 10 were developed, looking at the traffic that
- 11 was moving on the lines. I think it was the
- 12 2007 data, because that's what we had, but
- 13 based on what the law required in 2008.
- But, again, we were very
- 15 conservative in the way we applied this by
- 16 omitting entirely the cost to maintain the
- 17 system, which the FRA estimates is going to be
- 18 about 15 percent of the sort of base
- 19 installation costs.
- 20 We did assume substantial levels
- 21 of public funding. The way we did the numbers
- 22 and allocated the costs, we assumed that our

- 1 lines that had commuter traffic, the commuter
- 2 rail lines, would bear 100 percent of the
- 3 costs, and on the lines where there was Amtrak
- 4 traffic and TIH traffic that Amtrak would bear
- 5 25 percent of the costs.
- 6 And I think the numbers may be
- 7 confidential, but if you look at the
- 8 percentages and you look at the numbers they
- 9 imply, it's a substantial number that, while
- 10 it's not entirely the amount in the
- 11 legislation that Mr. Wilcox cited, which is,
- 12 I believe, \$250 million, if you assume that
- 13 Union Pacific's experience would be repeated
- 14 with other railroads, that \$250 million would
- 15 very quickly be exhausted. So we were very
- 16 conservative there.
- 17 And then in our rebuttal we took
- 18 the further step, and we said, you know, maybe
- 19 there is some uncertainty about exactly where
- 20 PTC is going to be required. Maybe there'll
- 21 be some de minimis exceptions. And so we just
- 22 took off a substantial chunk. We took off

- 1 \$400 million. And we said, even if you do
- 2 that and you apply our adjustment you're going
- 3 to find that the rates are reasonable.
- 4 And the Board doesn't to have to
- 5 pick a single point estimate here. The Board
- 6 doesn't need to adopt its estimate of what
- 7 it's going to cost Union Pacific to install
- 8 PTC. The question in this case is simply
- 9 whether the challenged rates here are
- 10 reasonable.
- 11 And what we showed is that under a
- 12 very wide range of assumptions, if you take
- 13 Union Pacific's best estimate or if you take
- 14 a number that's substantially lower, the rates
- in this case would be reasonable.
- 16 COMMISSIONER MULVEY: So you're
- 17 saying that for the \$1.5 billion that Union
- 18 Pacific thinks it's going to have to spend to
- 19 become PTC compliant, large parts of that will
- 20 be borne by the commuter railroads and by
- 21 Amtrak as well as TIH shippers. But, when you
- 22 look at the amount going to TIH, you take into

- 1 account the amounts that are likely going to
- 2 be covered by the commuter railroads, public
- 3 sector and the like.
- 4 MR. ROSENTHAL: The estimate that
- 5 -- the \$1.4 billion was Union Pacific's
- 6 estimate for what it would cost to install
- 7 PTC. When we were developing what we think
- 8 it's fair to be assigned to US Magnesium in
- 9 judging its reasonable rates, we assumed that
- 10 a portion of that \$1.4 billion would be
- 11 covered by some source, perhaps it's public
- 12 funding, where you have these commuter rail
- 13 lines. Again, we assumed it would be 100
- 14 percent to the commuters and 25 percent to
- 15 Amtrak.
- So we did, in building this
- 17 adjustment, consider a substantial amount of
- 18 public funding, and, again, when you compare
- 19 it to the legislation, a very substantial
- amount of public funding that we were, we
- 21 think, very conservative in that estimate, as
- 22 well.

- 1 COMMISSIONER MULVEY: And then one
- 2 last follow-up on that, do you assume that any
- 3 of the traffic, any of the costs should be
- 4 borne by other traffic than TIH traffic
- 5 because to the extent that there is an
- 6 accident or to the extent that PTC makes the
- 7 railroad more efficient and more safe that
- 8 other traffic should also bear part of the
- 9 benefit or part of the cost?
- 10 MR. ROSENTHAL: I'd like to
- 11 address that in two ways. First, as part of
- 12 our rebuttal, when we looked at different
- 13 variations on how costs might be lower than
- 14 what we had estimated or how the benefits
- 15 might be higher, we did take into account the
- 16 Federal Railroad Administration's analysis of
- 17 the benefits of PTC.
- 18 And we assumed that, for purposes
- 19 of one of our calculations, we said, well,
- 20 what if Union Pacific got all those benefits,
- 21 the sort of operating benefits? And still we
- 22 set aside the 15 percent FRA estimate of costs

- 1 that it will cost to maintain the system.
- 2 And we showed that even under
- 3 those circumstances, if you applied our
- 4 adjustment, the challenged rates would be
- 5 found to be reasonable. So we took it into
- 6 account in that way, as well.
- 7 VICE CHAIR NOTTINGHAM: Mr.
- 8 Rosenthal, have you begun to raise rates to
- 9 your passenger rail customers in the various
- 10 pricing agreements you have with them to
- 11 account for the new PIH, excuse me, PTC
- 12 mandate?
- 13 MR. ROSENTHAL: I don't know the
- 14 answer to that. I don't know what our various
- 15 agreements would allow us to do with the
- 16 passenger carriers.
- 17 VICE CHAIR NOTTINGHAM: So are you
- 18 saying there's sort of a selective or random
- 19 process whereby UP is deciding to recoup some
- 20 potential costs from some customers but not
- 21 others?
- MR. ROSENTHAL: No, I don't think

- 1 I'm saying that. I'm just saying I don't
- 2 really know what the situation is with respect
- 3 to our passenger railroads. I don't know what
- 4 the contracts are. I don't know when they
- 5 were entered into. And I don't know to what
- 6 extent they would allow us to make these
- 7 changes.
- I know, for example, I've seen
- 9 Amtrak's public statements where they say they
- 10 don't believe that under the standards that
- 11 apply to their rates they should be required
- 12 to bear any of the costs associated with
- installing PTC on other railroad lines. I've
- 14 seen that.
- And, as I said, I think that's one
- 16 of the reasons why our assumption that Amtrak
- 17 would bear 25 percent of the cost is rather
- 18 conservative. But I don't know specifically
- 19 what our arrangements are with other commuter
- 20 carriers.
- 21 VICE CHAIR NOTTINGHAM: And,
- 22 please understand, I think the argument that

- 1 the PTC mandate is real, it's in federal law,
- 2 and it's very expensive as it currently
- 3 exists, unless that's amended or adjusted by
- 4 statute.
- 5 And someone's going to have to pay
- 6 those costs, and it would appear that it would
- 7 end up being freight rail customers, and
- 8 probably, I would assert, primarily the
- 9 freight rail customers who are the direct link
- 10 or cause to that new mandate, namely your TIH
- 11 and your passenger customers. So it's a
- 12 compelling argument you raise in the other
- 13 relevant factors part of your case.
- I guess what I'm looking for is
- 15 how to answer sort of the timing question. In
- 16 other words, did you just conveniently pick up
- 17 that argument because you got caught assessing
- 18 500-plus percent rates over variable costs in
- 19 this case, or can you show and demonstrate the
- 20 type of corporate communication one would
- 21 expect to see if a railroad were rolling out
- 22 a dramatic new pricing arrangement to account

- 1 for a \$1.4-billion new federally enacted
- 2 unfunded mandate, things like letters to all
- 3 customers, possibly a new accounting handling
- 4 where you're setting up a trust fund to
- 5 reserve those funds over years so they'll be
- 6 available in the future so you can demonstrate
- 7 both to your shareholders and to your
- 8 regulators and customers that you have a
- 9 serious program to set aside the funding
- 10 needed?
- 11 Can you point to some of those
- 12 what I'd call indicia of corporate strategy to
- 13 seriously tackle this? Or, if not, would it
- 14 be because there are no regulations yet? We
- don't even know what technology FRA is going
- 16 to endorse.
- 17 And it's pretty hard for anybody
- 18 to be spending big-time money on a PTC mandate
- 19 that actually doesn't technically exist right
- 20 now other than it is in law, so it's coming,
- 21 but my understanding is you couldn't -- if we
- 22 gave you \$1.4 billion you couldn't meet the

- 1 so-called PTC mandate now because there's so
- 2 much left to be known.
- 3 MR. ROSENTHAL: First of all, just
- 4 as a fact, UP is spending big-time money now
- 5 to comply with the PTC mandate. US Magnesium
- 6 and some of these other groups say, "Well,
- 7 maybe there'll be an amendment, maybe there'll
- 8 be this, maybe there'll be that."
- 9 Union Pacific is dealing with a
- 10 statute that requires it to install PTC on the
- 11 lines required by law by the end of 2015.
- 12 They can't start to do that on December 30,
- 13 2015. It is spending money now. Union
- 14 Pacific's also made a commitment to install
- 15 PTC in the Los Angeles Basin area by I think
- 16 it's the end of 2012, and it's spending money
- 17 to do that.
- 18 Now, in this particular case, when
- 19 we're talking about the issue that we're
- 20 trying to address by the PTC adjustment, PTC
- 21 is part of it. The real issue is that the
- 22 rates that are being used to set the markups

- 1 in this case, that's rates based on traffic
- 2 that moved between 2004 and 2007, are
- 3 different than they are today. They're
- 4 different for a number of reasons, a lot of
- 5 them dealing with new regulations apart from
- 6 PTC.
- 7 We went through a long list in our
- 8 opening evidence of the new regulations from
- 9 the Transportation Safety Administration and
- 10 the -- Security Administration, the Pipeline
- 11 Hazardous Material Safety Administration,
- 12 these things that have been raising our costs
- 13 that have been reflected in higher rates.
- 14 PTC is one of them. It's the most
- 15 recent, and it's certainly the most dramatic.
- 16 And it happens to be the one, because of those
- 17 characteristics, because it's dramatic, that
- 18 we were able to quantify it in this case and
- 19 meet the Board's very stringent guidelines set
- 20 up under the three-benchmark methodology.
- 21 And that's all we're asking the
- 22 Board to do is to apply its three-benchmark

- 1 methodology to look at this as an other
- 2 relevant factor and to give us the
- 3 opportunity.
- 4 And, again, we're not saying that
- 5 -- the Board doesn't have to pick a rate. The
- 6 Board does not tell us what we can charge. It
- 7 tells us the maximum, but it doesn't allow us
- 8 to charge a particular rate to US Magnesium.
- 9 It doesn't require US Magnesium to pay any
- 10 particular rate to us. The market ultimately
- 11 makes those decisions.
- 12 What we're saying is that in
- 13 setting the maximum reasonable rates in this
- 14 case the Board should follow its three-
- 15 benchmark methodology and give us the
- 16 opportunity to recover the very real, very
- 17 substantial costs to install PTC from the
- 18 traffic that's causing us to incur those
- 19 costs.
- 20 VICE CHAIR NOTTINGHAM: Mr.
- 21 Rosenthal, if I could follow up on that
- 22 general line of inquiry, why do you think

- 1 Congress specifically included TIH traffic in
- 2 the PTC mandate? We all are aware of the
- 3 horrible passenger rail accident in the Los
- 4 Angeles area shortly before the PTC mandate
- 5 was put into law.
- 6 Obviously, not many of us were
- 7 surprised to see passenger rail as a focus for
- 8 that new technology deployment for increased
- 9 safety. Why specifically do you think
- 10 Congress added TIH and really nothing else?
- 11 MR. ROSENTHAL: Well, I mean, I
- 12 can't sit here and completely understand
- 13 what's in Congress's mind, but when you look
- 14 back at the legislative history they were
- 15 concerned not only about the passenger
- 16 incident, but they were also concerned about
- 17 the chlorine release in Graniteville, South
- 18 Carolina. There were records of other
- 19 releases of anhydrous and chlorine.
- 20 So I think they understood, I'm
- 21 guessing that they understood the sort of
- 22 devastation that can be caused by releases of

- 1 these commodities. And if you look at the
- 2 FRA's analysis, if you look at their economic
- 3 analysis, of the costs to install PTC versus
- 4 the benefits, what the FRA says is even
- 5 considering all these things it doesn't make
- 6 economic sense.
- 7 But I assume that why Congress
- 8 would've imposed this sort of burden is
- 9 because they understood the massive amounts of
- 10 risks that are associated with PTC, with TIH,
- 11 sorry, with TIH in particular. That's what I
- 12 can see would justify this type of program.
- 13 VICE CHAIR NOTTINGHAM: If I could
- 14 summarize, is your point that Congress
- 15 recognized in the statute that included the
- 16 PTC mandate that TIH is uniquely risky?
- 17 MR. ROSENTHAL: I think that's
- 18 what the statute tells us. That's why when
- 19 you look at where PTC is mandated, it's
- 20 passenger and it's TIH. That's what the
- 21 statute says. If it didn't say TIH we
- 22 wouldn't be incurring --

- 1 VICE CHAIR NOTTINGHAM: I'll take
- 2 that as a yes. Thanks. So, UP is, if you
- 3 follow the common carrier obligation rationale
- 4 and line of case law, UP is, in essence,
- 5 required to handle and carry and transport a
- 6 uniquely hazardous substance known generally
- 7 as TIH, recognized as uniquely hazardous in
- 8 statute by Congress, and clearly there are
- 9 costs associated with carrying something
- 10 uniquely hazardous.
- 11 What options or alternatives does
- 12 UP have to both capture and identify those
- 13 costs and then to recoup them? Because
- 14 clearly I don't think anyone expects you to
- 15 just absorb real business costs that even
- 16 Congress is recognizing.
- 17 So you've got a challenge of how
- 18 to capture. You've got things like insurance,
- 19 presumably, possibly both commercial insurance
- 20 and self-insurance. You've got things like
- 21 extra maintenance or safety precautions that
- 22 you might need to deploy because of this

- 1 uniquely hazardous material that you're
- 2 transporting.
- 3 How does, I mean, how do our
- 4 reports that we collect, for example, allow a
- 5 railroad to capture and show those costs so
- 6 that when we're looking at your rates --
- 7 because the idea generally here is we're
- 8 supposed to capture all the key cost elements
- 9 in documents like the R-1 report, and that
- 10 feeds into URCS, the Uniform Rail Costing
- 11 System.
- 12 And presumably over time one
- 13 reason this line of questioning, I think, is
- 14 important is that when you have real
- investments that are being made to implement
- 16 the PTC mandate, those would be captured, as
- 17 all other major lines of railroad investments
- 18 are captured, in reports like the R-1 that
- 19 feeds into URCS that then underlies our rate
- 20 complaint adjudication process. I know I've
- 21 given you a lot to work with there, but I want
- 22 to --

- 1 MR. ROSENTHAL: Yes, no, I mean, I
- 2 think you're absolutely right. I think a very
- 3 important issue and one that Union Pacific is
- 4 wrestling with now is how to capture these
- 5 costs.
- 6 And the Board has noticed a couple
- 7 of proceedings, one dealing specifically with
- 8 TIH and one dealing more generally with URCS,
- 9 in which it has, I guess, started the process
- 10 of asking how do we capture these costs in the
- 11 accounting systems?
- 12 And Union Pacific has participated
- in both proceedings, and we've said that we
- 14 will, we are very happy to work with the Board
- in trying to capture these sorts of costs and
- 16 better reflect them, because they are very
- 17 substantial.
- 18 And in some of Union Pacific's
- 19 evidence before, in the -- one of the
- 20 subproceedings, we did try to explain how
- 21 we've been trying to capture some of the
- 22 investment costs, some of the additional

- 1 training costs and try to reduce it to a per-
- 2 car level.
- 3 But it's a complicated exercise,
- 4 and it's difficult to tease out these costs,
- 5 and we think that the proceedings started by
- 6 the Board would be useful in helping to get
- 7 these costs in a more systematic way into the
- 8 rail costing system.
- 9 And there are other examples, as
- 10 we pointed out in our opening evidence. There
- 11 are examples where the Board's accounting
- 12 system tries to look separately at intermodal
- 13 terminal costs, for example, and certain
- 14 passenger costs, and tries to capture them in
- 15 accounts.
- 16 And we think that might very well
- 17 be appropriate for the types of costs that
- 18 we're incurring not just for PTC but for a lot
- 19 of the other operating changes that have to be
- 20 made and a lot of the other investments that
- 21 are being made as a result of these many new
- 22 safety regulations that --

- 1 VICE CHAIR NOTTINGHAM: Do you
- 2 believe, just to follow up on that, do you
- 3 believe that the Board's, this Board's current
- 4 data collection processes and data sorts
- 5 properly -- allow railroads to properly
- 6 account for the unique, as recognized by
- 7 Congress, risk premium associated with being
- 8 required to transport TIH?
- 9 MR. ROSENTHAL: Well, no, I don't
- 10 think they do. I think one of the problems
- 11 that's happening and one of the reasons why
- 12 somebody will come up and say, "Look at your
- 13 RVC ratios, they're so very high," I think
- 14 part of the problem is that the costs that
- 15 should be more properly attributed to TIH
- 16 traffic are being spread on a system average
- 17 basis over all traffic, and that if you
- 18 actually captured the costs and assigned them
- 19 appropriately that the markups wouldn't be as
- 20 high as they may seem. They'd be different in
- 21 relation to the costs if they were properly
- 22 allocated.

- 1 COMMISSIONER MULVEY: When you
- 2 refer to properly allocated costs of the TIH
- 3 movements, are you including also the
- 4 insurance premiums associated with
- 5 catastrophic risk, or are you referring more
- 6 to the direct increased costs of handling TIH
- 7 materials?
- 8 MR. ROSENTHAL: Well, both, and I
- 9 think there's a third. I think there are
- 10 direct handling costs related to TIH
- 11 materials, there are new regulations involving
- 12 positive handoff, involving monitoring,
- involving tracking and reporting.
- 14 I think there are higher insurance
- 15 premium costs because I think it stands to
- 16 reason that we're paying more in insurance
- 17 because we're carrying chlorine and other TIHs
- 18 than we would if we weren't carrying those.
- 19 And I think there's also an
- 20 element of the risk of the uninsured cost if
- 21 something actually happens, and that's a cost,
- 22 too. And I think that's probably -- that may

- 1 well be beyond the Board's capability to
- 2 account for. I don't know. But at this point
- 3 I don't think the system accounts for either
- 4 the insurance costs, the actual dollars paid,
- 5 or the operating-type costs.
- 6 COMMISSIONER MULVEY: Yes, the
- 7 catastrophic risk is very, very difficult to
- 8 estimate, and I appreciate that. But one
- 9 other thing, you were talking about the amount
- 10 of time that the UP and other railroads have
- 11 to comply with the legal mandate to install
- 12 PTC, the end of 2015.
- Isn't it also true that PTC has
- 14 been on, and the only railroad one on, the
- 15 NTSB's top 10 lists for about 20 years now,
- 16 and that the NTSB, the Safety Board, has been
- 17 arguing for the need for PTC, and that there
- 18 really has been time for UP and the other
- 19 railroads to begin planning for this or begin
- 20 taking this recommendation seriously, or did
- 21 you figure that it might just go away?
- 22 MR. ROSENTHAL: No, I think what

- 1 the evidence shows and what we discussed in
- 2 our opening evidence is that Union Pacific
- 3 and other railroads have been looking at PTC
- 4 for years and have spent a substantial amount
- 5 of money testing it.
- 6 One of the reports that we use as
- 7 the basis of our evidence is a test project
- 8 that was going on in the Illinois area. It
- 9 has been tested. Railroads have spent money
- 10 on it.
- 11 What they've been testing is a
- 12 slightly different system, because the system
- 13 that they were ultimately -- if they had
- installed it, given the time, might've given
- 15 some benefits, as well.
- 16 CHAIR ELLIOTT: Mr. Rosenthal, in
- 17 the interest of fairness I think we'll
- 18 probably move on at this point. I think
- 19 we've kind of gone over, especially to Mr.
- 20 Wilcox. I think he might go to sleep over
- 21 there after --
- 22 VICE CHAIR NOTTINGHAM: Mr.

- 1 Chairman, just on a procedural question,
- 2 timing, are we going to have Mr. Rosenthal
- 3 back before us under any kind of rebuttal, or
- 4 -- because I just had one final question I
- 5 wanted to try to get on the record book
- 6 before he leaves us, if that's possible.
- 7 CHAIR ELLIOTT: No, we won't have
- 8 any rebuttal.
- 9 VICE CHAIR NOTTINGHAM: Is it
- 10 possible to just do one wrap-up question?
- 11 CHAIR ELLIOTT: Sure.
- 12 VICE CHAIR NOTTINGHAM: Thanks. I
- 13 appreciate the Board's and the Chairman's
- 14 patience. I know I've taken up a fair amount
- 15 of time. And, Mr. Wilcox, I appreciate your
- 16 patience, too, and Mr. Rosenthal.
- Just, I just want to make sure,
- 18 because I think this is critical to a big
- 19 picture understanding of the puzzle we have
- 20 before us here, I hear you, I believe I hear
- 21 you say, Mr. Rosenthal, that the Board's
- 22 current revenue data that we collect, which

- 1 really serves as the underpinning or the
- 2 foundation on which we make rail rate
- 3 complaint decisions, doesn't actually allow
- 4 railroad to demonstrate and account for, or
- 5 does not account for very real costs of
- 6 carrying something that's recognized in
- 7 statute by Congress that is uniquely
- 8 hazardous and risky, and that puts a
- 9 railroad, arguably, if I follow your line of
- 10 argument, in a pretty tough position, because
- 11 you've got real costs.
- 12 You can't get them into the STB's
- 13 revenue databank, so to speak, and you're
- 14 susceptible, then, to rate challenges, but
- 15 you can't actually point and say, "There it
- 16 is. It's built in the R-1 data and the URCS
- 17 data."
- 18 What does that leave a railroad to
- 19 do I guess is what I'm getting at? Isn't
- 20 indemnification then kind of the natural
- 21 option?
- 22 If you can't -- if a process

- 1 doesn't work to actually collect meaningful
- 2 data and you've got real risk that nobody
- 3 seems to really be arguing, because, after
- 4 all, it's not a question of if there's going
- 5 to be an accident involving TIH, it's just a
- 6 question of when. I think everyone agrees
- 7 railroading inherently has some risk to it,
- 8 even though it's the safest mode of transport
- 9 available.
- 10 We've had major releases in recent
- 11 years. The only thing in doubt is will the
- 12 next major release of TIH from a rail
- 13 accident be today or next month or next year,
- 14 and how does a railroad -- what about
- 15 indemnification? Do you have anything to say
- 16 on that point, or partial indemnification?
- 17 MR. ROSENTHAL: Absolutely. I
- 18 mean, I think there are two issues. One is
- 19 that how do we deal with it now because it's
- 20 not in the Board's system is we've set our
- 21 rates and we find ourselves defending a rate
- 22 case.

- 1 And so we have done our best
- working within the Board's three-benchmark
- 3 methodology in this case to try to show what
- 4 some of these costs are and how they should
- 5 be properly attributed to the commodities
- 6 that are causing them.
- 7 As far as what Union Pacific is
- 8 doing as a practical matter, we talk a lot in
- 9 our evidence about what we are doing to try
- 10 to reduce the risks associated with shipping
- 11 these commodities.
- We are trying to encourage
- 13 shippers to reduce unnecessary long
- 14 shipments. We are taking steps with our own
- 15 safety processes and procedures to make it as
- 16 safe as possible.
- 17 And, yes, we are trying to
- 18 negotiate provisions that better allocate the
- 19 liability in the event that there is a
- 20 release, that the railroad is not held --
- 21 that reflects the fact that some of the
- 22 damage is caused because of the extremely

- 1 hazardous nature of the commodity and not
- 2 necessarily because of anything the railroad
- 3 does. So it's a matter of all those things.
- As a rate matter, we try to work
- 5 within the Board's framework and justify the
- 6 rates that we're charging, and on a practical
- 7 matter on a number of fronts the railroad is
- 8 doing what it can to reduce the risks, to
- 9 encourage shippers to take actions to reduce
- 10 the risks, and to try to make sure that it's
- 11 not stuck bearing all the costs if an
- 12 incident occurs because of losses caused by
- 13 the extremely hazardous nature of the
- 14 commodities it's carrying.
- 15 CHAIR ELLIOTT: Thank you, Mr.
- 16 Rosenthal.
- 17 Mr. Wilcox, you have seven minutes
- 18 on rebuttal, but I'll give you a little bit
- 19 more time.
- 20 MR. WILCOX: Sir, I would like
- 21 just a fraction of that additional time is
- 22 fine with me. So is there a number or should

- 1 I just -- I need to keep that in mind. 1
- 2 have lots of notes from what was just, just
- 3 transpired.
- 4 CHAIR ELLIOTT: I don't know
- 5 exactly what, how far we went over. Do you
- 6 have any idea? Fifteen minutes sound --
- 7 MR. WILCOX: That's fine.
- 8 CHAIR ELLIOTT: Is that
- 9 acceptable?
- MR. WILCOX: Sure.
- 11 CHAIR ELLIOTT: If the questions
- 12 continue in the manner that they just did,
- 13 you may end up there all day.
- 14 MR. WILCOX: That's fine also. I
- 15 have as much time as you want.
- I guess I'll start with PTC. Mr.
- 17 Rosenthal said that UP is starting to spend
- 18 money now and it needs money to do the -- to
- 19 make these investments. I would argue that
- 20 UP has plenty of money to make these
- 21 investments.
- 22 It's charging its -- by their own

- 1 admission they're charging their current TIH
- 2 chlorine shippers and other TIH shippers 400,
- 3 500 percent revenue variable cost ratios.
- 4 The rates have gone extremely high.
- We believe that is not because
- 6 they, as Chairman Nottingham noted, they did
- 7 not announce that they were going to do this
- 8 because of PTC. We believe they did it
- 9 because of their de-marketing efforts, which
- 10 I'll get to in a second.
- Now, the other thing is to keep in
- 12 mind, this is in the context of the three-
- 13 benchmark case. Now, Mr. Rosenthal mentioned
- 14 that UP believes it's spending a lot of other
- 15 money, spending money on other regulatory and
- 16 safety-type issues that it did not include in
- 17 the three-benchmark case.
- 18 And that's important, because the
- 19 case, the three-benchmark methodology, has
- 20 the RC comp and the RSAM and the
- 21 calculations, but then the other relevant
- 22 factors are very specific.

- 1 It says in order to get relief or
- 2 rebut the presumption at the unreasonable
- 3 rate and either raise or lower it you have to
- 4 be able to quantify what those amounts are.
- 5 And we don't think they can be -- the PTC --
- 6 UP chose PTC.
- 7 They said in their evidence, "We
- 8 can't quantify all the other stuff, but we're
- 9 going to try to quantify PTC." We think they
- 10 fell very short. We think that there's a lot
- 11 of uncertainty.
- 12 And in terms of public funding,
- 13 Mr. Rosenthal mentioned the \$250 million that
- 14 is in the Railroad Safety Act. The
- 15 transportation plan, I've got to get the
- 16 title right, the National Rail Plan,
- 17 preliminary National Rail Plan, talks in
- 18 terms of financing, which we believe this is
- 19 in addition to the \$250 million which
- 20 directly applies, the way this is written,
- 21 directly applies to things like PTC.
- He said there are critical rail

- 1 projects that might be pursued if additional
- 2 resources were available. This is
- 3 particularly true for joint freight passenger
- 4 improvements where the benefit for either
- 5 mode may not be enough to justify a project,
- 6 although the total benefit would warrant it.
- 7 They're talking about projects of
- 8 national significance, and in terms of they
- 9 want to evaluate alternative strategies for
- 10 financing freight and passenger rail needs.
- 11 And that implies or sort of indicates that to
- 12 the extent you have joint freight-rail
- 13 operations, and if there are issues like PTC,
- 14 where the benefits do not exceed the costs,
- 15 that public funding will occur.
- 16 And that kind of -- that starts to
- 17 blend, as I said earlier, how these things
- 18 are going to be paid for. USM does not
- 19 dispute that PTC is out there and there's a
- 20 statute that says that some PTC has to be
- 21 implemented. But whoever mentioned the
- 22 timing issue, that is the issue.

- 1 What exactly is going to happen
- 2 remains to be seen. And as far as whether it
- 3 happens at all, Mr. Mobley, that was a very
- 4 interesting point, because we recently had a
- 5 transportation forum here where the TSA
- 6 representatives were talking about how they
- 7 have taken measures to eliminate it was a
- 8 very high percentage of what they call risk
- 9 out of the system in terms of just managing
- 10 rail cars, keeping an eye on them, and just
- 11 managing the system better in terms of
- 12 eliminating a lot of the risk that is
- 13 perceived.
- 14 So we acknowledge, USM and I think
- 15 all shippers acknowledge that PTC is out
- 16 there, but the extent to which it can be
- 17 brought into this case and quantified and
- 18 meet the standard of the Simplified Standards
- 19 we don't think that UP did it in this case.
- 20 And this type of issue, as was evident from
- 21 the discussion, is a very big policy issue
- 22 and may or may not be suitable for a three-

- 1 benchmark case.
- 2 And one of the things that the
- 3 Simplified standard says is that the board
- 4 will take a close look as these cases develop
- 5 as to what is appropriate for an other
- 6 relevant factor, and if it's going to drive
- 7 up the cost and the overall process for the
- 8 three-benchmark methodology maybe it won't
- 9 be, that type of thing won't be included.
- 10 But I think at the end of the day
- 11 our view is UP did not meet its burden as far
- 12 as quantifying PTC. And, again, we believe
- 13 that to the extent UP does invest over the
- 14 prescription period to invest in PTC, those
- 15 costs, UP even admits some of those costs in
- 16 the short term will be captured in URCS over
- 17 the prescription period.
- 18 To the extent the Board revises
- 19 URCS over the next couple of years, the
- 20 changes in URCS will fold into the
- 21 calculation of the prescribed rates, and the
- 22 fact that you have a 300 percent starting

- 1 point provides UP with money to make that
- 2 investment.
- 3 So in terms of, well, let's see,
- 4 de-marketing, we believe that the evidence
- 5 shows that UP is de-marketing. And a lot of
- 6 the things that UP is doing is the same thing
- 7 CSX was doing in DuPont.
- 8 UP is, over the last, over the
- 9 waybill period, as part of this, in this
- 10 proceeding, 2004 to 2007, it got rid of
- 11 movements where there was another railroad
- 12 that could handle the business.
- 13 They have evidence showing they
- 14 allowed that to go to the competitor and they
- 15 didn't try to get it back when rail volumes
- 16 or rail demand died. They show that they
- 17 want to have customers move chlorine, or TIH
- 18 and other -- chlorine and other TIH
- 19 commodities shorter distances.
- They talk about pricing so there's
- 21 no unnecessary transportation. They filed a
- 22 petition with the Board, with USM, four of

- 1 USM's rates, to try to get out of the, or be
- 2 excused from the common carrier obligation of
- 3 providing rates to transport over certain
- 4 distances.
- 5 And that, if the petition had been
- 6 granted, would have had wider ramifications
- 7 and turned into a proceeding where a lot of
- 8 people, a lot of associations, weighed in.
- 9 So, as we point out, the profit
- 10 maximization part, I mean, if, essentially,
- 11 UP is trying to de-market the extent to which
- 12 it handles TIH commodities, but they do
- 13 recognize that they have to carry some, and
- 14 so they are raising the prices as high as
- 15 possible, and they do --
- 16 VICE CHAIR NOTTINGHAM: Mr.
- 17 Wilcox, could I -- excuse the interruption,
- 18 but on your point about de-marketing, that's
- 19 obviously a very serious allegation, one that
- 20 I believe personally would be more
- 21 appropriate for an unreasonable practice
- 22 complaint, however.

- 1 Whether or not UP -- let's assume
- 2 just for the moment that UP, we were to find
- 3 that UP's rates were unreasonably high in
- 4 this case, I don't think we're obligated to
- 5 assign motive to that, whether it was an
- 6 accident, somebody in accounting messed up
- 7 and added a couple of zeroes to your rate, or
- 8 whether they had sinister motives to de-
- 9 market. I mean, if it's unreasonable, it's
- 10 unreasonable, correct?
- 11 Are you trying to make kind of a
- 12 motive argument here, and why not the
- 13 unreasonable practice if you think you've got
- 14 the case to make on that? Because it is a
- 15 very serious charge, and I would encourage
- 16 shippers to bring an unreasonable practice
- 17 complaint if they can demonstrate real de-
- 18 marketing of a common carrier obligation-
- 19 covered movement.
- 20 MR. WILCOX: Well, I think USM
- 21 believes that UP is indifferent as to whether
- 22 USM continues to transport chlorine. I think

- 1 that in terms of a de-marketing or profit
- 2 maximization-type argument, the main point
- 3 was to show that UP is treating all these
- 4 commodities the same in terms of a comparison
- 5 group of showing that the transportation
- 6 demand characteristics are the same.
- 7 So, but we do believe that there
- 8 is some de-marketing in terms of managing the
- 9 market that is going on. Now, in terms of
- 10 the --
- 11 COMMISSIONER MULVEY: Well, are
- 12 you saying that the de-marketing is being
- 13 carried out by the rate process and that's
- 14 why this is sort of blended? Vice Chairman
- 15 Nottingham suggested it's a practice, and de-
- 16 marketing could be a practice. On the other
- 17 hand, if it's being pursued through higher
- 18 rates, then it's sort of blending the
- 19 practice with the rate issue.
- 20 MR. WILCOX: Right, and the way
- 21 we've approached it in the case is that it's
- 22 more along the reasonable rate analysis, but

- 1 we also believe that in terms of the request
- 2 for the damage, increase the damage limit,
- 3 that there are two arguments there.
- 4 One, we believe UP did set the
- 5 rates at a very high level in order to try to
- 6 dissuade USM from using the three-benchmark
- 7 methodology.
- 8 The second argument is that the
- 9 pricing practices, however they're
- 10 characterized, we don't believe that the
- 11 three-benchmark methodology contemplated a
- 12 situation where the railroad was raising
- 13 rates 100 percent, 200 percent per year,
- 14 because if you look back, you see you're
- 15 going to end up with a huge gap even if you
- 16 prevail in terms of the reasonable rate
- 17 versus what the damages are measured off of.
- 18 COMMISSIONER MULVEY: But they are
- 19 profit maximizers. I mean, that's their
- 20 purpose is to maximize profits and to, in
- 21 this case, to accomplish that through
- 22 differential pricing, and to the extent that

- 1 there are additional costs associated with
- 2 handling chlorine, then wouldn't profit
- 3 maximization suggest that these rates do need
- 4 to be higher?
- 5 MR. WILCOX: Well, but profit
- 6 maximization assumes, doesn't it, that the
- 7 railroad wants to handle the traffic? UP has
- 8 said they do not want to handle TIH
- 9 movements. And so --
- 10 COMMISSIONER MULVEY: I guess the
- 11 issue is that you do not want to handle it
- 12 unless you can be fully compensated for all
- 13 the costs associated with TIH movements as
- 14 opposed to not wanting to handle it period,
- 15 no matter how profitable it could be, I think
- if USM would agree that, look, we will be
- 17 fully responsible for any catastrophic
- 18 accident that occurs from handling it, my
- 19 suspicion would be UP would be more than
- 20 happy to take you up on that offer.
- MR. WILCOX: Well, in terms of the
- 22 profit maximization versus -- well, in terms

- 1 of the liability, the -- USM does not, I
- 2 guess, and other shippers don't disagree that
- 3 they should pay their fair share of the costs
- 4 for moving their commodity. I think the
- 5 issue in this case is whether what UP has
- 6 proposed is fair in the context of this case.
- 7 CHAIR ELLIOTT: Can I follow up on
- 8 that? With respect to your comparison group,
- 9 it had a very small percentage of chlorine
- 10 shipments. Is that strictly as a result of
- 11 what you consider to be this de-marketing
- 12 claim?
- MR. WILCOX: Well, no. The
- 14 composition of the comparison group was
- 15 driven by the combination of the waybill
- 16 sample and then the factors of the issue
- 17 movements. The waybill sample had less than
- 18 3 percent of chlorine movements that were
- 19 very closely comparable in terms of UP
- 20 single-line movements origin to destination.
- 21 And so both parties in terms of
- 22 putting together comparison groups had that

- 1 to start with. We chose to go the route that
- 2 the Board accepted in DuPont of saying you
- 3 can prepare a comp group that contains mixed
- 4 chlorine and TIH movements of the same
- 5 distance origin to destination.
- 6 UP went a different route, where
- 7 they included -- they widened the distance to
- 8 capture more UP single-line movements, they
- 9 had 10, and then the re-billed movements,
- 10 which we believe should not have been in
- 11 there, and the fact that they are in there
- 12 skew the results and are not -- end up with
- 13 an overall comparison group that's not
- 14 comparable at all to the issue movements.
- 15 COMMISSIONER MULVEY: Do you feel
- 16 that the absolute number of movements in the
- 17 UP comparison group is also a problem, that
- 18 there's just too few movements because it's
- 19 limited to the single commodity, unlike
- 20 DuPont and unlike what you did, where it was
- 21 a mix of both anhydrous and chlorine?
- I mean, UP did say that, well,

- 1 they have sufficient numbers, and comparing
- 2 it to others that there were sufficient
- 3 numbers in the movements to Eloy and the
- 4 other movement for comparison purposes.
- 5 MR. WILCOX: Well, in terms of
- 6 absolute numbers, that's an evidentiary
- 7 question, I think, as these cases move on,
- 8 but, or you see more cases. But I think if
- 9 you're trying to do a comparison based on a
- 10 very large waybill sample, then I think more
- 11 examples are better than few. Not to say
- 12 that a few couldn't be found to be
- 13 comparable.
- We think that the fact that we --
- 15 essentially, we took our -- the comparability
- 16 factors and applied it, applied them to all
- 17 TIH movements in the waybill sample that met
- 18 the comparability factors for each movement.
- 19 VICE CHAIR NOTTINGHAM: Mr.
- 20 Wilcox, would you agree that it's difficult
- 21 for a railroad to capture all of its risk,
- 22 I'll call it risk premium costs, associated

- 1 with contingencies of an accident involving a
- 2 railcar carrying TIH, and furthermore that
- 3 our STB data that we collect on revenues
- 4 doesn't do a very good job of allowing those
- 5 costs to get directly inputted into documents
- 6 like R-1 and URCS?
- 7 MR. WILCOX: Well, I know that the
- 8 issue of how to capture those type of costs
- 9 is before the Board right now. Whether I
- 10 believe that they're sufficiently calculated
- 11 now I actually don't -- or captured now I
- 12 really don't have an opinion on that.
- 13 VICE CHAIR NOTTINGHAM: Do you
- 14 think it would be helpful to shippers
- 15 generally to have the Board clarify those
- 16 related issues, or do you think the status
- 17 quo is fine?
- In other words, just fight these
- 19 out in individual cases as opposed to getting
- 20 some type of restatement of the Board's
- 21 position on these more macro issues that
- 22 might not be properly -- we might not be able

- 1 to fully address in a simplified case.
- 2 MR. WILCOX: Well, I believe that
- 3 the issue of PTC costs and how URCS captures
- 4 hazardous-type costs is an issue that is
- 5 before the Board now, and I think that it's
- 6 an issue, more of a global issue, that the
- 7 Board should pursue, and not within this case
- 8 in particular, just because of, primarily for
- 9 timing in terms of the uncertainty of the PTC
- 10 costs, which is before the Board at this
- 11 case. But I think that those issues are more
- 12 suitable for an overall proceeding.
- 13 VICE CHAIR NOTTINGHAM: Thank you.
- 14 And just the last follow-up, if UP or other
- 15 railroads were to, in recognition of the
- 16 difficulty in pinpointing all of those costs
- 17 dealing with contingencies, some of which are
- 18 slightly remote contingencies, but, as I said
- 19 earlier, not a question of if but when the
- 20 next accident is going to happen, and if that
- 21 is a difficult exact number to pinpoint and
- 22 pass on to rail customers to contribute to,

- 1 isn't that why we see throughout
- 2 transportation of different modes,
- 3 transportation of hazardous goods in
- 4 particular, things like indemnification
- 5 provisions, where a shipping company with an
- 6 oceangoing vessel doesn't have to fight it
- 7 out with the individual shipper before the
- 8 ship leaves, weighs anchor and leaves port
- 9 about exactly all the scenarios that could
- 10 happen for carrying something?
- 11 They agree on indemnification
- 12 provision, let's say 50/50. The producer of
- the hazardous material will be responsible
- 14 for 50 percent of accident-related costs and
- 15 the carrier the other 50, and so they both
- 16 remain highly, completely highly motivated to
- 17 be as safe as possible because they're on the
- 18 hook, but it recognizes that they're
- 19 basically, in essence, partners in the supply
- 20 chain of a very important, in your client's
- 21 case, I would say, a very important commodity
- 22 that the economy depends on to function.

- 1 MR. WILCOX: Right. And I would
- 2 say USM would consider --
- 3 VICE CHAIR NOTTINGHAM: In
- 4 exchange for lower rates, presumably.
- 5 Obviously, you would --
- 6 MR. WILCOX: -- no, would consider
- 7 itself a partner of UP in that respect, in
- 8 terms of safety. They worked with UP and
- 9 received their Pinnacle Award for Safety for
- 10 how many years, four years.
- 11 In terms of allocating risk, you
- 12 have the DOT Hazmat regulations that allocate
- 13 who is liable for what in terms of the chain
- 14 of loading it, of loading the materials. You
- 15 have railcar specifications. You have --
- 16 there is allocation of risk in contracts
- 17 between railroads and shippers.
- 18 There was a discussion earlier, I
- 19 believe over the summer, between in fact UP
- 20 and chemical shippers in terms of the
- 21 indemnification provision in one of UP's
- 22 tariffs as to how to properly allocate risk

- 1 between the parties.
- 2 VICE CHAIR NOTTINGHAM: So
- 3 indemnification is -- it does happen
- 4 currently in isolated cases? It is already a
- 5 routine, fairly routine business practice in
- 6 the rail transportation of TIH?
- 7 MR. WILCOX: In rail
- 8 transportation generally, yes,
- 9 indemnification is part of most transactions.
- 10 In TIH, again, from a common carrier
- 11 standpoint, UP does, in speaking of UP
- 12 specifically, they do have a provision
- dealing with indemnification. Most railroads
- 14 do have provisions that address that.
- 15 VICE CHAIR NOTTINGHAM: Thank you.
- 16 CHAIR ELLIOTT: Thank you.
- 17 Thank you very much, Mr. Wilcox,
- 18 and thank you very much, both of you, for
- 19 your excellent arguments today and your
- 20 patience with our little extra time today.
- 21 Our next oral argument will be
- 22 January 26, 2010, and we will -- the meeting

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     of the Board is now adjourned.
 1
                  (Whereupon, at 11:00 a.m., the
 2
     foregoing matter was adjourned.)
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