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VIA ELECTRONIC FILING

December 29, 2023

Ms. Cynthia Brown, Chief
Section of Administration
Office of Proceedings
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street SW
Washington, DC 20423

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Office of Proceedings
December 29, 2023
Part of
Public Record

RE: Docket No. EP 770 (Sub No. 1), Urgent Issues in Freight Rail Service

Dear Ms. Brown:

BNSF respectfully submits this update on the status of our service recovery plan filed on May 20, 2022, as modified in accordance with the Board's June 16, 2022 decision. The data in this report reflects BNSF's service performance during the week ending December 23. BNSF achieved target for ten of our twelve KPIs. The following chart reflects our performance against our KPI targets over the past eight weeks:

	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	8 Week Avg.
Train Speed	98%	101%	100%	103%	104%	104%	104%	105%	102%
Dwell	100%	103%	104%	99%	102%	107%	102%	100%	102%
Trains Holding	125%	147%	144%	140%	150%	153%	145%	125%	141%
Local Service	101%	102%	102%	101%	98%	100%	101%	101%	101%
Overall OTP	105%	109%	111%	111%	114%	118%	116%	116%	113%
Intermodal OTP	107%	109%	112%	113%	110%	119%	119%	119%	114%
Coal OTP	98%	107%	105%	97%	100%	102%	105%	106%	103%
Merch OTP	103%	103%	106%	108%	118%	120%	108%	111%	110%
Grain OTP	70%	85%	85%	84%	109%	88%	77%	85%	85%
Crude OTP	84%	73%	84%	78%	88%	92%	83%	90%	84%
Auto OTP	95%	94%	100%	107%	128%	116%	113%	104%	107%
Ethanol OTP	103%	95%	83%	120%	117%	109%	104%	101%	104%

BNSF's operations—and accordingly our performance against some of our KPIs—have been significantly affected over the past two weeks by the issues at the U.S.-Mexico rail border crossings at Eagle Pass and El Paso, Texas. Congestion issues and embargoes in Mexico have comprised a headwind for grain traffic throughout harvest season, and this congestion became especially acute with respect to grain traffic last week.

Impacts to BNSF's operations have been exacerbated by U.S. Customs and Border Protection's decision to close the rail border crossings from December 18 to December 22.¹ BNSF operates an average of 12 daily trains to and from Mexico over these crossings, principally moving grain, automobiles, and a variety of industrial commodities. At the time of the border closure, BNSF had 23 trains of agricultural commodities en route to Mexico on our network and 31 trains of agricultural commodities offline in Mexico. Over 4,700 BNSF-controlled grain cars, in addition to customer private cars, were impacted by the border closure, either due to being stranded in Mexico or holding at points on our network.

In order to prevent additional shipments from being billed to Mexico while the border was closed, BNSF placed a permit embargo on shipments to the El Paso and Eagle Pass border crossings that went into effect December 21. The embargo remains in place following the reopening of the border in order to restore service in an orderly fashion and clear the backlog of accumulated traffic. With over 12 days' worth of southbound trains currently staged, the embargo is a necessary measure to allow normal traffic flows to resume as quickly as possible.

The border closure affected more traffic than just the traffic moving across the border. For instance, the inability to get empty grain cars back across the border meant there was less equipment to support other grain export programs, domestic feed, and grain for food processing moving in other parts of our network, and we have seen an increase in past due car orders as a result. Additionally, BNSF has been required to hold Mexico-bound trains as far away as Minnesota to avoid paralyzing the portion of our network proximate to the border crossings. While this is necessary to avoid a loss of fluidity on our network in Texas and New Mexico, the accumulation of staged trains and held cars consume siding and yard capacity throughout our network, thus affecting fluidity everywhere.

BNSF has been closely engaged with our customers, our interchange rail partners, and the Department of Homeland Security to track developments throughout the border closure. We are moving quickly to restore normal operations with the border reopened, although the timeframe for restoring all aspects of service will depend on conditions south of the border and other carriers' ability to interchange traffic with BNSF. BNSF will remain in close contact with our customers throughout this process to identify and execute on recovery opportunities and will issue permits as conditions permit.

Our efforts to recover from the border closure will be aided by the strong overall state of our network. BNSF will close the year with strong service across all of our service segments. For instance, BNSF experienced our peak train and car velocity of the year in week 48, which was our highest volume week of the year, and we have seen a quarter-over-quarter increase in manifest on-time performance even as manifest, intermodal, and agricultural volumes increased. We are pleased to close out 2023 by providing service that meets our customers' expectations and look forward to a successful 2024.

¹ See <https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/speeches-and-statements/statement-cbp-suspension-rail-operations-eagle-pass-and-el-paso>.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Adam Weiskittel', with a stylized, cursive script.

Adam Weiskittel
AVP & Associate General Counsel, Operations

CC: Mr. Michael Higgins, Office of Public Assistance, Government Affairs, and Compliance



BNSF Service Recovery Plan

Key Performance Indicators

	Baseline (March 4, 2022)	Current ¹	Progress Against Baseline	Target
Overall Velocity	24.4 mph	27.4 mph	+12.3% ↑	26 mph
Terminal Dwell	28.8 hrs	25.4 hrs	-11.8% ↓	25.5 hrs
Local Service Performance	87.6%	91.7%	+4.7% ↑	91%
Overall On Time Performance	62.4%	81.4%	+30.4% ↑	70%
Average Trains Holding	147.3	70.9	-51.9% ↓	95

¹ The data in this column reflects the data BNSF reported on December 27, which reflects performance in the week ending December 22.



BNSF Service Recovery Plan

Key Performance Indicators

	Baseline	Current	Progress Against Baseline	Target
Intermodal	66.9%	89.5%	+22.6pp 	75%
Coal Unit	66.6%	79.2%	+12.6pp 	75%
Merchandise	46.9%	72.2%	+25.3pp 	65%
Grain Unit	62.7%	63.4%	+.7pp 	75%
Crude Unit	46.1%	62.7%	+16.6pp 	70%
Auto Unit	52.0%	72.6%	+20.6pp 	70%
Ethanol Unit	18.0%	50.4%	+32.4pp 	50%

TYE Unavailability and Cause

	12/10/..	12/11/..	12/12/..	12/13/..	12/14/..	12/15/..	12/16/..	12/17/..	12/18/..	12/19/..	12/20/..	12/21/..	12/22/..	12/23/..
Availability	66.2%	73.4%	76.0%	76.2%	75.9%	71.2%	62.9%	62.9%	69.2%	71.2%	72.1%	72.3%	68.2%	58.8%
Agreement	418	485	441	385	364	401	427	401	526	488	424	389	440	532
Absences	534	505	460	502	524	640	680	784	641	575	541	629	727	845
Company Business	28	41	65	85	72	49	19	24	64	87	77	53	27	9
FMLA/Medical Leave	272	222	172	169	198	252	330	356	278	212	197	192	247	353
Furloughed	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Miscellaneous	50	42	29	28	24	19	14	16	19	16	12	8	8	8
Training	4	11	25	18	13	4	2	3	12	9	5	2	2	1
Vacation/Paid Leave	1,031	1,007	955	964	1,037	1,142	1,197	1,161	1,324	1,322	1,399	1,456	1,572	1,632