

***Surface Transportation Board
Washington, D.C. 20423-0001
Office of Economics***

May 14, 2024

Yanfeng Ouyang, Ph.D.
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
George Krambles Endowed Professor in Rail and Public Transit
Department of Civil & Environmental Engineering
Newmark Civil Engineering Laboratory, MC-250
205 N. Mathews Ave.
Urbana, IL. 61801

Re: Waybill Request WB24-15

Dear Mr. Ouyang:

This letter responds to your request under 49 C.F.R. § 1244.9(c) of February 28, 2024 for access to the unmasked Confidential Carload Waybill Sample (CCWS) for the years 1984-2022. You requested the data in order “[t]o develop a freight data hub and decision-support web-portal to enhance efficiency, sustainability, and resiliency of highway/railway/waterway intermodal freight operations.” Notice of your request was published in the Federal Register on April 12, 2024 (89 Fed. Reg. 72, 25910), and no objections were received.

The CCWS contains data that is highly confidential to both rail shippers and railroads. Unmasked revenue data, for example, are among the most commercially sensitive information that railroads possess. The Board has, under appropriate circumstances, granted access to the CCWS for academic professionals who are working on a research project where the proposed project is adequately defined, and the request makes clear why the data requested are necessary and how the data will be used in the analysis. The Board’s regulations require both a complete and detailed explanation of the purpose for which the data are requested and a detailed justification for why the specific data requested are needed. See 49 C.F.R. § 1244.9(e)(1)(i-iii). Based on the limited information provided in your letter, I am not able to fully evaluate your stated need for the unmasked revenues nor discern how these data would be used in your research project. I am therefore denying your request.

To resubmit your request with the additional information discussed above, please follow the procedure detailed in 49 C.F.R. §§ 1244.9(c) and (e). In addition, pursuant to 49 C.F.R. § 1244.9(d)(4)(iii), you may appeal this determination within 10 days of the date of this letter. Under the Board’s regulations, “[a]ppeals are not favored and will be granted only in exceptional circumstances to correct a clear error of judgment or to prevent manifest injustice.” 49 C.F.R. § 1011.6(b). Replies must be filed within 10 days after the due date for appeals.

Sincerely,

**KRISTEN
MONACO**

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KRISTEN MONACO
Date: 2024.05.14
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Kristen Monaco, PhD
Director
Office of Economics