

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

October 22, 2024

Andrew Sweeting
Department of Economics
University of Maryland
College Park, MD 20742

Re: Waybill Request WB24-55

Dear Mr. Sweeting:

The Surface Transportation Board (STB or Board) has approved your request to extend your access to the STB Carload Waybill Samples with unmasked revenues for 1984-2021(minus the fields identified in your Attachment as not necessary to your research) originally obtained in WB23-57. This data may only be used for the purposes outlined in your request and may not be used for any other purpose such as private, commercial consulting. ***This approval becomes effective when signed agreements from the individuals listed below are received by the STB:***

- a) *Andrew Sweeting – Professor – University of Maryland*
- b) *Louis Preonas – Assistant Professor – University of Maryland*
- c) *Qian Wang – PhD Student – University of Maryland*
- d) *Jingyi Xing – PhD Student – University of Maryland*

The expiration date for this agreement is October 31, 2025. Unless you seek and obtain a renewal from the STB, this agreement upon expiration obligates you to return or destroy all copies of the data (see item 6 of the agreement). Any request for renewal will need to provide a detailed explanation for why continued access to the data is necessary and demonstrate that you are continuing to actively use the data for the originally requested purpose.

Several aspects of the CCWS limit the conclusions that may be drawn from analysis of the CCWS: 1) the CCWS is a sample, and 2) the CCWS is based on terminating shipments from relatively large carriers. Only those railroads with more than 4,500 annual terminating carloads are included in the sample. The limited sampling of small railroads may have a substantial effect on studies covering areas served predominately by non-sampled railroads. For additional information on the CCWS, see *Reference Guide* @ <https://www.stb.gov/reports-data/waybill/> on the Board's website.

The rules for release of waybill data are codified at 49 C.F.R. § 1244.9. The CCWS contains confidential shipper and railroad data. As a result, the CCWS is commercially sensitive and has the potential to cause competitive harm to shippers and railroads if disclosed. Therefore, the following agreement must be signed, and a copy of the signature pages returned to the STB, before any waybill data can be used.

Waybill Agreement WB24-55

Your signature acknowledges your agreement to comply with the following:

1. You will use the CCWS data released to you solely for the purpose requested.
2. Absent permission from the STB, you shall make the information contained in the CCWS (including work product and analyses derived from the CCWS) available only to the individuals identified above. The STB may approve access for additional individuals within your entity working on the particular project or study requiring the waybill data. Each such additional individual must review and sign this agreement, and return a copy of the signature page to the STB.
3. You will not release any CCWS data (including work product and analyses derived from the CCWS) to anyone who has not signed this agreement and been approved for access by the STB until the STB has had the opportunity to review the materials proposed for disclosure to ensure confidentiality.
4. You acknowledge that, in addition to the restrictions described in paragraphs 1 and 2 above, you are bound by the STB's rules governing use and disclosure of CCWS data. These include the confidentiality provisions of 49 C.F.R. §§ 1244.9(f)(1)-(3), which require that "[a]ny shipper data obtained from the Waybill Sample shall not be publicly released unless the data are aggregated to include at least three shippers." In addition, you agree not to disclose CCWS data that permits identification of an individual railroad.
5. You will refer any requests for CCWS data in your possession (including work product and analyses derived from the CCWS) to the STB for processing and will inform the requesting party of such referral to the STB. If you are compelled by law or order of a governmental or judicial body to release CCWS data, you shall notify the Board in writing within three days of any determination that CCWS data must be released, and in no event later than five days before the CCWS data is scheduled to be released.
6. In order to retain access to the CCWS beyond the expiration date specified above, you must submit a written request for an annual extension of the agreement no later than thirty days prior to the expiration date and the renewal request must be approved by the Office of Economics. **If an annual agreement is not signed and approved, you must certify by no later than the expiration date that all CCWS data (including all work product and analyses derived from the CCWS) obtained under this agreement has been destroyed or returned to the STB.**

Waybill Agreement WB24-55

7. Failure to request an extension (if necessary), or destroy or return CCWS data when required, may prevent any future release of CCWS data to you. Violations of this agreement may subject you to sanctions by the Board.

After all parties have signed and returned this agreement, the extension is granted.

Sincerely,

KRISTEN
MONACO

Digitally signed by
KRISTEN MONACO
Date: 2024.10.22
14:11:08 -04'00'

Kristen Monaco, PhD
Director
Office of Economics

Waybill Agreement WB24-55

I have read and understand the conditions for release of the CCWS data. I agree to comply fully with these conditions and the provisions of this confidentiality agreement. No later than thirty days before the agreement expires, I will request an extension of this agreement, if necessary. If no extension is requested, I will return or destroy all CCWS data and certify that I have done so. I have the authority to sign this agreement.

By: Andrew Sweeting

**Andrew
Sweeting** Digitally signed by
Andrew Sweeting
Date: 2024.10.24
14:46:54 -04'00'

Signature

Waybill Agreement WB24-55

I have read and understand the conditions for release of the CCWS data. I agree to comply fully with these conditions and the provisions of this confidentiality agreement. No later than thirty days before the agreement expires, I will request an extension of this agreement, if necessary. If no extension is requested, I will return or destroy all CCWS data and certify that I have done so. I have the authority to sign this agreement.

By: Louis Preonas

Louis Preonas  Digitally signed by Louis Preonas
Date: 2024.10.24 18:27:01 -04'00'

Signature

Waybill Agreement WB24-55

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By: Qian Wang

Qian Wang

Digitally signed by Qian Wang
Date: 2024.10.24 20:50:30
-04'00'

Signature

Waybill Agreement WB24-55

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By: Jingyi Xing

Jingyi
Xing

Digitally signed by
Jingyi Xing
Date: 2024.10.24
19:39:28 -04'00'

Signature



UNIVERSITY OF
MARYLAND

3114 Tydings Hall
College Park, Maryland 20742-7211
301.405.3266 TEL 301.405.3542 FAX

Dr. Kristen Monaco
Director, Office of Economics
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street SW
Washington, D.C. 20423

October 21, 2024

Subject: Data Extension Request for CCWS (WB23-57)

Dear Dr. Monaco,

I am writing to request an extension for our project's access to the unmasked Confidential Carload Waybill Sample (CCWS) from 1984 to the present. We originally obtained access under WB23-57, for four researchers: Louis Preonas (PI), Andrew Sweeting (PI), Qian Wang (Research Assistant), and Jingyi Xing (Research Assistant). We request an extension for confidential data access for the same four project personnel.

Justification for Extension Request

We are advancing our project investigating the economic and policy implications of competitive interactions between railroads, coal mines, and coal power plants. This project is extremely data-intensive, as we are processing and merging the CCWS with several publicly available datasets on fossil fuel shipments, coal mine production and characteristics, and power plant operations and characteristics. As we described in our initial request (WB23-57), the CCWS are an essential component of our empirical analysis because it identifies the reporting railroad carrier, geographic information, and shipping rate on individual coal shipments.

Over the project's first year, we have worked to construct these merged datasets in support of a grant application to the National Science Foundation, which was submitted in August 2024. We have also pushed forward preliminary empirical analysis to support at least two academic manuscripts. In the next project year, we expect to develop a working draft of one manuscript, and to begin presenting it at academic conferences in preparation for submission to an academic journal. We expect to complete additional academic manuscripts in future years of this project.

Confidentiality and Data Management

We will continue to adhere to the confidentiality restrictions described in 49 CFR 1244.9. The CCWS will be used strictly for the academic research purposes discussed in WB23-57, and we will follow the University of Maryland's highest level of data security protocols for storing and handling restricted-access data. We will also refrain from publishing or presenting any data, statistics, or analysis derived from the

CCWS until the STB's Office of Economics has had the opportunity to review and ensure that confidentiality has been protected.

Thank you again for your consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns about this request.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "A.T. Sweeting". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "A" and "T" at the beginning.

Andrew Sweeting
Professor
Department of Economics
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University of Maryland
College Park, MD 20742
Email: atsweet@umd.edu
Tel: 301 405 8325