

BEFORE THE
SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

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STB Ex Parte No. 787

UPDATING CLASS I RAIL CARRIER REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

REPLY COMMENTS OF THE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN RAILROADS

The Association of American Railroads (“AAR”) respectfully submits these reply comments in accordance with the schedule set forth by the Surface Transportation Board (“STB” or “Board”) in its September 30, 2025 notice of proposed rulemaking, and subsequent procedural notice served on November 14, 2025.¹ AAR continues to generally support the Board’s proposal for the elimination of the Positive Train Control (“PTC”) R-1 reporting, and reiterates that if the Board adopts the service reporting requirements it should do so in alignment with AAR’s comments and reply comments.²

I. The Board Should Eliminate the PTC R-1 Reporting.

No commenter opposed the elimination of the PTC R-1 reporting. Indeed, the only comments filed regarding the proposal were in support of its elimination.³ Some of these

¹ See Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, *Updating Class I Rail Carrier Reporting Requirements*, EP 787, at 1 (STB served Sep. 30, 2025) (“NPRM”); Notice, *Updating Class I Rail Carrier Reporting Requirements*, EP 787, at 1 (STB served Nov. 14, 2025).

² See AAR Comments, *Updating Class I Rail Carrier Reporting Requirements*, EP 787 (Nov. 24, 2025).

³ See American Chemistry Council (“ACC”) Comments, *Updating Class I Rail Carrier Reporting Requirements*, EP 787, at 1-2 (Nov. 24, 2025); CSX Comments, *Updating Class I Rail Carrier Reporting Requirements*, EP 787, at 3,

comments also noted that it would be beneficial to the railroads to understand the need for the one-time summary document.⁴ As such, AAR reiterates its support for the Board's efforts to eliminate this unnecessary annual reporting. AAR also supports the Board continuing efforts to review other types of reporting that may be outdated or that could be streamlined moving forward.

II. Commenters' Proposed Expansions of the Service Metrics Are Unnecessary.

Several commenters request the Board apply the proposed metrics, or some variation thereof, to unit or intermodal service trains. The commenters argue that applying service metrics to unit or intermodal traffic will provide insight into overall network health. However, given the interconnected nature of the network, if there is a network-wide service issue, a properly designed manifest traffic metric will likely reflect it. Moreover, as the Board has explained several times, and AAR noted in its comments, the original estimated time of arrival ("OETA") and industry spot-pull ("ISP") metrics do not neatly align with unit or intermodal traffic in the same manner as manifest traffic.⁵ Indeed, as the Board is aware, several railroads do not even generate these types of metrics for unit trains.⁶ Requiring the metrics be reported for a traffic type for which it does not make sense would add regulatory burden, waste resources, and misrepresent service on the network. As such, before applying metrics designed for one

15 (Nov. 24, 2025); CN Comments, *Updating Class I Rail Carrier Reporting Requirements*, EP 787, at 1-4 (Nov. 24, 2025).

⁴ See AAR Comments at 3; CN Comments at 2-3.

⁵ See AAR Comments, at 5-6; NPRM, at 6-7; *Reciprocal Switching for Inadequate Service*, EP 711 (Sub-No. 2), at 38 (STB served April 30, 2024) ("*Reciprocal Switching*").

⁶ See NPRM at 7; *Reciprocal Switching* at 38; AAR Comments at 5-6; CN Comments at 6.

type of traffic to another, the Board must identify a need for such data collection beyond shipper associations' mere desire for the information.

Several commenters also request additional metrics be added to the weekly collections.⁷ Again, while the shipper associations express a desire for more data to be collected, they do not identify a justifiable need for the data. The Board discontinued its extensive temporary data reporting nearly two years ago, given improvements in service levels.⁸ No commenter alleges that service has diminished such that additional reporting would even be justified—nor could they. As the Board has noted previously, “information filing can be burdensome . . . and . . . can divert resources away from the transportation issues Reporting requirements impose real world costs on railroads and service reporting diverts railroad operating personnel from their principal mission of running the railroad.”⁹ Instead of seeking to add more reporting requirements to the industry, AAR supports the Board’s efforts to continue to modernize or eliminate outdated and unnecessary reporting, which, in turn, supports the Administration’s goal of reducing regulatory burdens.

⁷ See The Fertilizer Institute (“TFI”) Comments, *Updating Class I Rail Carrier Reporting Requirements*, EP 787, at 3 (Nov. 24, 2025); National Coal Transportation Association (“NCTA”) Comments, *Updating Class I Rail Carrier Reporting Requirements*, EP 787, at 7 (Nov. 24, 2025); US Department of Agriculture (“USDA”) Reply Comments, *Updating Class I Rail Carrier Reporting Requirements*, EP 787, at 3 (Dec. 8, 2025). Interestingly, the USDA attempts to justify the additional information reporting it desires by claiming that the hours saved from not having to provide the PTC R-1 reports make up for it, noting the estimated 156 burden hours for reporting OETA and ISP is “about *one-tenth* of the 1,400 hours the Board would free railroads from.” USDA Reply, at 3 (*emphasis in original*). Without arguing the merits of the Board’s estimates, AAR simply notes that even at its current estimates, the Board is not quite meeting the Administration’s requirement that agencies repeal 10 existing regulations for every new one issued. See Exec. Order No. 14192, *Increasing Prosperity Through Deregulation*, 90 Fed. Reg. 9065, at Sec. 1 (Feb. 6, 2025). Adding more reporting of additional metrics would only move the Board further away from the Administration’s deregulatory goal. Moreover, to the extent the requested data is not collected by the railroad in the ordinary course of business, the burden on the railroad to measure and collect such data increases

⁸ See *Urgent Issues in Freight Rail Service—Railroad Reporting*, EP 770-1 (STB served Jan. 31, 2024).

⁹ *Joint Petition for a Further Service Order*, SO 1518 (Sub-No. 1), et al., at 4 (STB served July 31, 1998).

Additionally, some entities suggest requiring OETA to count early arrivals against the railroad.¹⁰ This suggested change is unnecessary and would not serve the purpose of the Board's proposal. The Board's stated purpose for the metrics is to monitor service and treating early arrivals as on time does just that. Early arrivals do not usually indicate congestion in the network and often railroads and shippers can work together to manage flows into a particular customer's facility through constructive placement or other means. Moreover, counting early arrivals against a railroad could create a perverse incentive for a railroad to slow its traffic down. For these reasons, the Board should reject the suggested change to OETA.

III. If Reporting of Service Metrics Is Required, the Board Should Close Related Open Proceedings.

Many commenters broadly recognized that the proposed service metrics, especially ISP, address the issue of first-mile/last-mile service, and, in general, railroad service overall.¹¹ For example, NCTA summarizes that "ISP is a measurement of pure or isolated first-mile/last-mile data. First-mile/last-mile data is vital to the ultimate performance of railroad service and is typically carried out by separate trains and service, especially in the case of manifest traffic."¹² Several other shipper associations who commented mention similar claims.¹³ As such, if the Board adopts some form of the proposed metrics, it would be appropriate to close out the open

¹⁰ See ACC Comments, at 3; USDA Reply, at 2-3.

¹¹ See ACC Comments, at 3; National Industrial Transportation League ("NITL") Comments, *Updating Class I Rail Carrier Reporting Requirements*, EP 787, at 1 (Nov. 24, 2025); NCTA Comments, at 4-5; USDA Reply, at 1-2.

¹² NCTA Comments, at 4-5.

¹³ ACC Comments, at 3; International Dairy Foods Association Comments, *Updating Class I Rail Carrier Reporting Requirements*, EP 787, at 2 (Nov. 24, 2025); NITL Comments, at 1; Private Railcar Food and Beverage Association Comments, *Updating Class I Rail Carrier Reporting Requirements*, EP 787, at 5-6 (Nov. 24, 2025); TFI Comments, at 2-4.

proceedings regarding service issues, as AAR requested in its comments.¹⁴ Doing so would also align the Board with the deregulatory goals of the Administration.¹⁵

Conclusion

AAR reiterates its support for eliminating the unnecessary and burdensome reporting of the PTC R-1 schedule. In addition, AAR notes that if the Board adopts a rule with the proposed ISP and OETA service metrics, it should incorporate the suggestions set forth in AAR's comments and this reply.

Respectfully submitted,



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¹⁴ AAR Comments, at 12 (requesting closure of *First-Mile / Last-Mile Service*, EP 767; *Urgent Issues in Freight Rail Service*, EP 770; and *Urgent Issues in Freight Rail Service—Railroad Reporting*, EP 770-1).

¹⁵ See Exec. Order No. 14219, *Ensuring Lawful Governance and Implementing the President's "Department of Government Efficiency" Deregulatory Initiative*, 90 Fed. Reg. 10583 (Feb. 25, 2025) (establishing the deregulatory policy of the Administration); Exec. Order No. 14192, at Sec. 1 (generally requiring that any new regulation be accompanied by the repeal of 10 existing regulations).