BEFORE THE
SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

312896

ENTERED
Office of Chief Counsel
November 17, 2026
Part of
Public Record

FINANCE DOCKET NO. 36873

UNION PACIFIC CORPORATION AND
UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD COMPANY
—CONTROL—
NORFOLK SOUTHERN CORPORATION AND
NORFOLK SOUTHERN RAILWAY COMPANY

Briess Industries, Inc. and Unity Line, LLC
Verified Comments in Support of Restoring Rail Competition to
Manitowoc County and Northeast Wisconsin
Through Grant of the Application

Identification of Commentors.

Briess Industries, Inc. ("Briess"), family owned since 1876, is a producer and shipper of natural specialty ingredients for food and beverage. Briess owns and operates production facilities in Wisconsin that include an industrial campus and maritime port facilities at Manitowoc, Wisconsin.[1]

In May 2026, Briess facilitated creation of Class III Unity Line, LLC ("Unity Line").[2] Unity Line is solely a terminal railway holding itself out to connect with the serving Class Is, Union Pacific and/or CN.

[1] As a 150-year old, woman-owned agribusiness in America's heartland, and largest rail user in the region, Briess is well positioned to speak to the realities of underperforming rail service and its deleterious economic impact. Briess supports the Application because, upon approval of the proposed merger, the potential it creates for Briess and others in the Manitowoc County area and Northeast Wisconsin to gain access to single line or virtual single line intermodal and carload service nationwide.

[2] *Unity Line, LLC d/b/a Manitowoc Port & Terminal Railway – Operation Exemption – Rail Lines in Manitowoc County Wisconsin,* STB FD 36938, May 22, 2026, currently 1.5 miles of existing track adjacent to Briess facilities at the Briess private Port of Manitowoc on the Manitowoc River immediately west of Lake Michigan.

Reconnecting Manitowoc County to the and Present and Future UP System and Recreating a Competitive Route.

Unity Line will reconnect with Union Pacific immediately south of Cleveland, Wisconsin at the current terminus of Union Pacific's line at the Manitowoc and Sheboygan County line (MP 62.2).[3] The line between the UP terminus (MP 62.2) and Newton, WI (MP 69.0) is currently rail banked. See Figure 1, below.

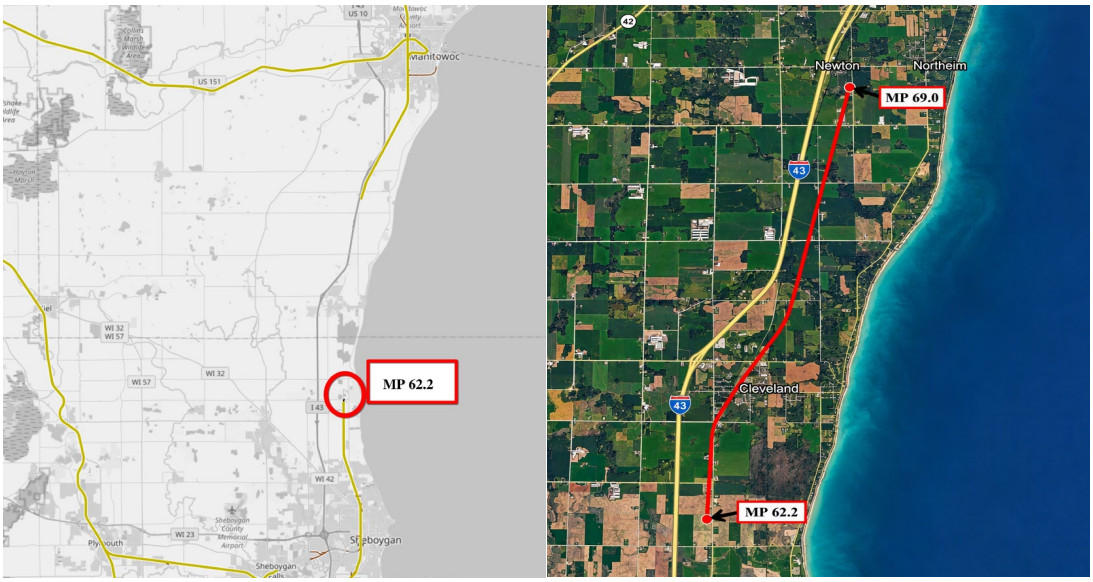

Figure 1

Establishment of a Manitowoc County Inland Port Adjacent to Cleveland/Newton Line.

Work by Briess for acquisition of land for facilities – grain storage and transportation – on or near Manitowoc/Sheboygan County Line is in progress. The Briess facility will relieve congestion at Briess' Port of Manitowoc by augmenting capacity, as the Briess Port is accommodating increasing volume of bulk commodities and achieving fuller utilization. Aided by a Port Infrastructure Development grant from USDOT's Maritime Administration ("MARAD"),

[3] This is a "reconnection" of a route severed in 1992 by which Union Pacific's predecessor Chicago and North Western served Manitowoc and the surrounding area. Until 1992, Manitowoc was served by two railroads; since 1992, Manitowoc has been served by one railroad, *i.e.,* Manitowoc went from 2 to 1.

the Briess Port of Manitowoc will experience near-term infrastructure investment of approximately $30 million, and longer-term, significantly more.[4]

Figure 2 (facing east) is an aerial view of Briess' Port of Manitowoc approximating its current configuration. At center are Briess silos and manufacturing facilities and, to the north on the Manitowoc River, is Briess' Grain Tower for loading and unloading vessels.

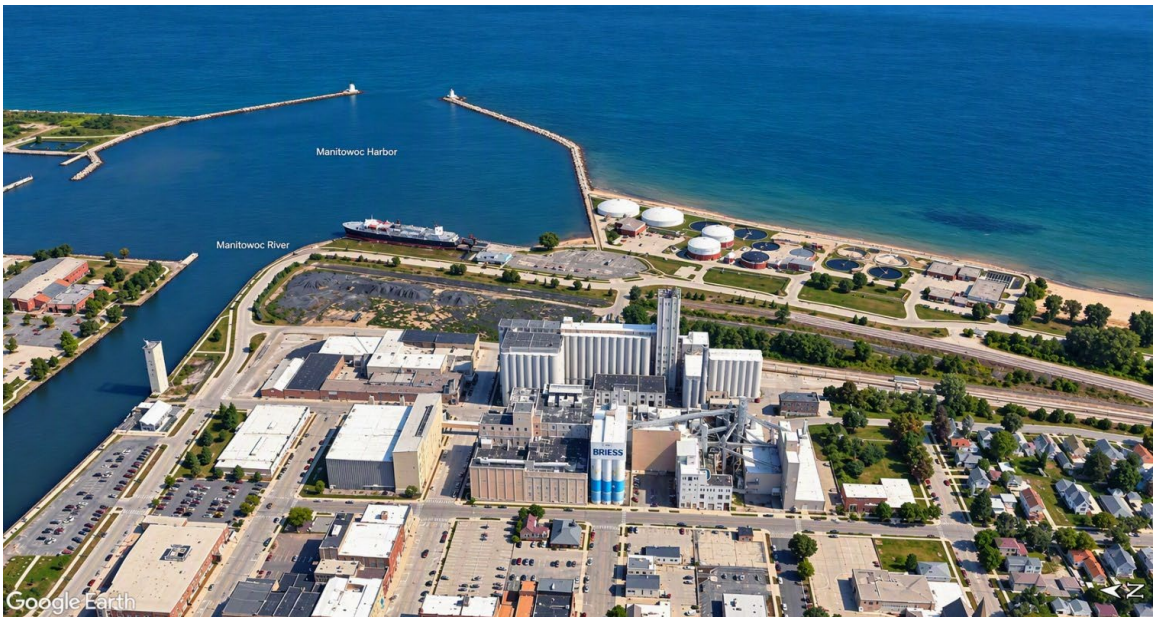

Figure 2

Expansion of the Briess Lakefront facilities cannot be effectively accomplished without establishment of an Inland Port facility at or near the Manitowoc/Sheboygan County Line.

Figure 3 (facing approximately northeast) is an illustrative rendering of the type of Inland Port facility Briess will locate adjacent to Cleveland-Newton rail line (Fig. 1).

[4] U.S. DOT Maritime Administration grant Fiscal Year 2026 Port Infrastructure Development Program.



Figure 3

The easterly track will serve the Briess facilities. The west track will serve as Unity Line's main line and passing track. To the west, the location has direct access to and from Interstate 43, depending on selected site location, within three miles of the facility.

Grant of the Pending UP/NS Merger Will Enhance Rail and Intermodal Competition For Shippers and Receivers in Manitowoc County and Northeast Wisconsin.

Virtual single line service between Manitowoc County and Norfolk Southern origins and destinations will have a significant pro-competitive impact for shippers and receivers in Manitowoc County and Northeast Wisconsin.[5] This enhancement of competition is entitled to substantial weight:

[5] STB release January 7, 2026, announcing that STB Proposes to Eliminate Barriers to Competition by Repealing Regulations at 49 C.F.R. PART 1144. STB characterized its unanimous decision as "a significant pro-competitive action."

> A merger transaction can also improve existing competition or provide new competitive opportunities, and **such enhanced competition will be given substantial weight in our analysis**.

49 C.F.R. § 1180.1(c)(1) (emphasis added). Such a single line haul would reduce the currently high cost of shipping from Northeast Wisconsin to virtually all locations outside the region. On the one hand, cost competitive rail transportation will make national and international business opportunities a reality, and on the other hand, will have pro-competitive effects on other modes of transportation. Businesses and consumers alike will benefit from this.

With or without the UP/NS merger – but much more so with the merger's nationwide single line intermodal – Unity Line's connection with UP at the Manitowoc/Sheboygan County line will significantly enhance competition.

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Respectfully submitted,

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Briess Industries, Inc.
Unity Line, LLC

Dated: November 17, 2026

VERIFICATION

I, Craig C. Briess, verify under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct. Further, I certify that I am CEO of Briess Industries, Inc. and a member of Unity Line, LLC and that I am qualified and authorized to file the foregoing document.

Craig C. Briess

November 17, 2026

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that on this 17th day of November, 2026, I caused copies of the foregoing Comments to be served by email or by first-class mail, postage prepaid, upon all parties of record in this proceeding and upon the other individuals that the Board identified for service in its Decision No. 5 served on September 26, 2025.

/s/ Peter A. Pfohl