

Decision ID No. 52572

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

April 22, 2025

Jin Yang
Economics PhD Candidate
Department of Economics
Northwestern University
2211 Campus Dr.
Evanston, IL 60208

Re: Waybill Request WB25-21

Dear Mr. Yang:

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 originally obtained in WB23-30 and later extended in WB24-23. 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) *Jin Yang – Northwestern University*

The expiration date for this agreement is April 30, 2026. 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 WB25-21

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 WB25-21

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

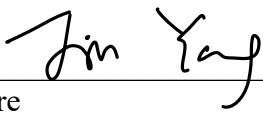
Digitally signed by
KRISTEN MONACO
Date: 2025.04.22
14:47:04 -04'00'

Kristen Monaco, PhD
Director
Office of Economics

Waybill Agreement WB25-21

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: Jin Yang



Signature

Kristen Monaco
Director, Office of Economics
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street SW
Washington, DC 20423

Subject: Waybill Sample Data Extension Request

Dear Dr. Monaco:

I am writing to request an extension for my access to the complete unmasked 1984-2021 Confidential Carload Waybill Sample, currently granted under WB24-23. I will continue to use it for academic research purposes only and be the sole user of CCWS. I have no amendments to report.

Research Goal

My primary research goal remains to study contracting practices in the rail freight transportation industry. More specifically, I examine the role of contracts in enabling differential pricing, or price discrimination, across shippers. I aim to understand how railroad companies use contracts and other pricing tools to expand service coverage, leverage economies of scale, and recover fixed costs. I am also interested in assessing the potential effects of recently discussed pricing regulations on both contract and tariff shippers.

Reasons for Extension Request

CCWS has been essential for my study so far, as it is the only source of information for the unmasked revenue reported in the contract shipments crucial to this research. Since I extended my original approval last May, I have written a version of my paper and received approval for confidentiality review of it. I am currently in the process of revising the paper and will soon submit it to an academic peer reviewed journal for publication. Therefore, I would like to request an extension for one more year to complete publication.

Confidentiality and Data Management

I will continue to adhere to the confidentiality restrictions described in 49 CFR 1244.9. The data will be used only for academic research purposes discussed above, and only by myself. As a researcher at Northwestern University, I have access to the University's Research Data Storage Service for secured storage and handling of restricted data. I understand that my research product

is subject to the Board's review and will make sure that strictly no individual information will be released.

Thank you again for your consideration. Should you have any questions, please contact me at any time.

Sincerely,

Jin Yang
Economics PhD Candidate
Department of Economics
Northwestern University
2211 Campus Dr, Evanston, IL 60208
jinyang2025@u.northwestern.edu
(858) 666-5265