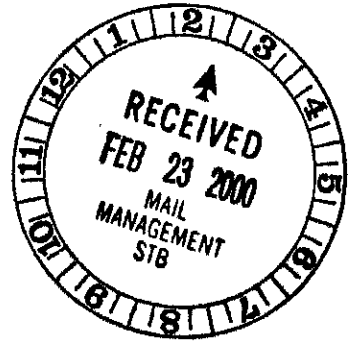


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Northwest Transloading

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February 18, 2000



Surface Transportation Board
Office of the Secretary
Case Control Unit
Attn: STB Ex Parte No. 582
1925 K Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20423-0001

Dear STB:

My company uses rail transportation. We load and unload an average of 300 railcars per year. We use the Union Pacific Railroad.

I support the STB's decision in the BNSF/CN docket (No. 33842) to examine carefully the BNSF/CN proposed control application, including all of the effects it could have on the rail transportation industry. The Board should not look at the BNSF/CN transaction in a vacuum. It should consider the effects that further mergers and consolidations in the rail industry will have on shippers.

I also applaud the Board for its decision to solicit public comment and hold a hearing, before BNSF and CN file their application, to begin to address the efforts of the proposed BNSF/CN transaction and potential future rail consolidations on the structure of the rail industry in North America.

Railroad service was improving significantly in the early 1990's, when railroads' managements were not distracted by one merger proposal after another and all the implementation efforts that followed STB approval. That progress was interrupted by the BNSF merger and those that followed. Until the BNSF/CN proposal, we looked forward to a hiatus of at least several years during which railroads could again focus their attention on improving the existing network rather than changing again through mergers.

The rail industry has made significant progress since deregulation. My company does not want to see the return of more onerous economic regulation of the railroads. That would have a negative impact on the financial health of the industry. Ultimately, railroads would reduce their investment in the infrastructure, abandon track and reduce service. It would soon be evident that the remaining railroads would not be able to meet the demands for transportation service that they fill today. Yet the BNSF/CN merger and others that are likely to follow will lead to increased calls in Congress to reregulate the industry.

Sincerely,


Mike Simon

Owner