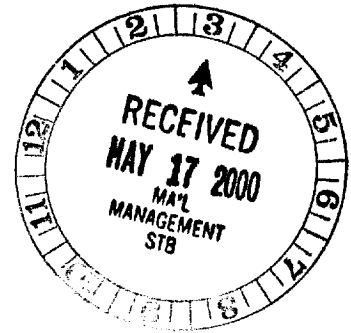




P.O. Box 16709
Atlanta, GA 30321
404-267-2200

May 17, 2000



The Honorable Linda Morgan
Chairman
U.S. Surface Transportation Board
1925 K. Street, NW
Washington, DC 20412

ENTERED
Office of the Secretary

MAY 18 2000

Re: Section 5a Application No.61 (Sub-No.6)
National Classification Committee – Agreement

Part of
Public Record

Dear Chairman Morgan:

My name is Clete Cordero. I am Director of Traffic and Marketing for Benton Express, Inc. of Atlanta, GA. Benton Express holds operating authority issued by the ICC under Certificate Number MC-110410. It is a participating carrier in the National Motor Freight Classification (NMFC) and a member of the National Motor Freight Traffic Association, Inc. (NMFTA).

I have been a member of the National Motor Freight Traffic Association and National Classification Committee since February 1999.

Though, short tenure, I wish to file my personal comments in the proceeding because of my disappointment in the STB's February 11, 2000, Decision.

The February 11th Decision reflects an overall distrust of the NCC's procedures. My concern is that this distrust stems from unsupported allegations with disregard for the evidence that supports NCC's procedures.

Pages 3 and 4 of the Decision states "in the record there is ample evidence showing that, while shippers have not been altogether excluded from the classification process, the barriers to shipper participation are strong enough to produce a bias toward classification changes that overall result in rate increases." Dealing with this subject matter day in and day out allows me to state that classification changes do not directly reflect or directly lead to either rate increases or rate decreases. Classification of a commodity is dictated and derived from facts of transportation characteristics while rate increases or rate decreases is purely market and cost driven. My job would be much easier every day if I could rely on the National Motor Freight Classification to determine what I must charge my customers. The NMFC is only a guide that gives my department

and myself the information we need to help us then determine how to develop the rates and charges that will allow Benton Express to be in business for another 65 years.

The only downfall to the National Classification Committee's procedures is that the critics of the procedures have not yet taken advantage of the opportunities available to them to participate in the NCC Procedures. I know of no carrier or staff barriers that would prohibit anyone from participating or learning what takes place. The decisions made on classification proposals are based on the record and the transportation characteristics of the product, consistent with the NCC guidelines and the terms and conditions set out in the 5a Agreement and the law.

Sincerely,

BENTON EXPRESS, INC.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cleto Cordero', written in a cursive style.

Clete Cordero, Director of Traffic

Cc: Parties of Record