

November 3, 2022

Majority Leader Chuck Schumer
U.S. Senate
S-221 U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Republican Leader Mitch McConnell
U.S. Senate
S-230 U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Speaker Nancy Pelosi
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232 U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Republican Leader Kevin McCarthy
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204 U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader Schumer, Speaker Pelosi, Republican Leader McConnell, and Republican Leader McCarthy:

On behalf of our collective food and agricultural memberships, we write to urge swift action to avert a rail strike or lockout that would lead to shutdowns or slowdowns of rail-dependent facilities resulting in devastating consequences to our national and global food security.

President Biden and his administration successfully brokered an agreement between the National Railway Labor Conference (NRLC) and twelve unions on September 15. Unfortunately, two unions have voted to not ratify while members of four others continue to review the agreement. Due to a combination of the non-ratification votes and the NRLC advising through a press release that “now is not the time to introduce new demands,” congressional action will be necessary if the parties fail to reach agreement. Currently, the next potential rail shutdown is scheduled for November 19, and we urge Congress to be prepared to act quickly when arriving back in session on November 14. Adding urgency to this matter, critical inputs and agricultural products such as ammonia shipments¹ could be embargoed starting on November 14.

A strike or lockout combined with existing challenges in the rail system, at our ports, with trucking and with record low water levels on the Mississippi River impacting numerous barge shipments would be catastrophic for the agricultural and broader U.S. economies. Congress must act to prevent this from occurring if the parties cannot reach agreement.

Resolution of this dispute prior to November 19 is necessary to ensure rail service continues uninterrupted. We thank you for your responsiveness to this imminent supply chain issue.

Sincerely,

Agricultural Transportation Working Group

Agribusiness Association of Iowa
Agribusiness Council of Indiana
Agricultural and Food Transporters Conference
Agricultural Council of Arkansas
Agricultural Retailers Association
Agriculture Transportation Coalition
Alabama Beverage Association
Amcot
American Bakers Association

¹ Ammonia is a critical fertilizer and building block for three-fourths of all fertilizers. In September, there were embargoed ammonia shipments approximately 5 days prior to a potential rail shutdown.

American Beverage Association
American Cotton Producers
American Cotton Shippers Association
American Farm Bureau Federation
American Feed Industry Association
American Frozen Food Institute
American Malting Barley Association
American Peanut Shellers Association
American Seed Trade Association
American Sheep Industry Association
American Soybean Association
American Sugar Alliance
American Sugar Cane League
Arizona Beverage Association
Arkansas Rice
Beef Alliance
Beer Institute
Border Trade Alliance
California Alfalfa and Forage Association
California Cattlemen's Association
California Cotton Ginner & Growers Association
California Fresh Fruit Association
California Grain and Feed Association
California Seed Association
California Walnut Commission
California Warehouse Association
Can Manufacturers Institute
Carolina Feed Industry Association
Consumer Brands Association
Corn Refiners Association
Cotton Growers Warehouse Association
Cotton Warehouse Association of America
Cottonseed and Feed Association
Council for Responsible Nutrition
Distilled Spirits Council of the U.S.
Farm Credit Council
Florida Cattlemen's Association
Florida Feed Association
FMI - The Food Industry Association
Forest Resources Association
Fresh Produce Association of the Americas
Georgia Beverage Association
Global Cold Chain Alliance
Grain and Feed Association of Illinois
Growth Energy
Hops Growers of America
Idaho-Oregon Fruit and Vegetable Association
Institute of Shortening and Edible Oils
International Bottled Water Association
International Dairy Foods Association
International Foodservice Distributors Association
International Fresh Produce Association

Iowa Renewable Fuels Association
Kansas Agribusiness Retailers Association
Kansas Beverage Association
Kansas Grain and Feed Association
Kansas Livestock Association
Leather and Hide Council of America
Maine Beverage Association
MD-DE-DC Beverage Association
Meat Import Council of America
Michigan Agri-Business Association
Michigan Bean Commission
Michigan Bean Shippers
Michigan Soft Drink Association
Minnesota Agri-Growth Council
Minnesota Beverage Association
Minnesota Crop Production Retailers
Minnesota Grain and Feed Association
Missouri Agribusiness Association
Montana Agricultural Business Association
Montana Beverage Association
Montana Feed Association
Montana Grain Elevator Association
Montana Grain Growers Association
National Aquaculture Association
National Association of Wheat Growers
National Barley Growers Association
National Cattlemen's Beef Association
National Confectioners Association
National Corn Growers Association
National Cotton Council
National Cotton Ginners Association
National Cottonseed Products Association
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives
National Fisheries Institute
National Grain and Feed Association
National Grange
National Milk Producers Federation
National Oilseed Processors Association
National Onion Association
National Pasta Association
National Pecan Shellers Association
National Propane Gas Association
National Sorghum Producers
National Turkey Federation
Nebraska Agri-Business Association
Nebraska Beverage Association
Nebraska Cattlemen
Nebraska Cooperative Council
Nebraska Dry Pea & Lentil Commission
Nebraska Wheat Board
Nebraska Wheat Growers Association
North American Equipment Dealers Association

North American Meat Institute
North American Millers' Association
North American Renderers Association
North Carolina Agribusiness Council
North Dakota Agricultural Association
North Dakota Ethanol Producers Association
North Dakota Grain Dealers Association
North Dakota Grain Growers Association
North Dakota Wheat Commission
Northeast Agribusiness and Feed Alliance
Ohio AgriBusiness Association
Ohio Beverage Association
Oklahoma Agribusiness Retailers Association
Oklahoma Beverage Association
Oklahoma Grain & Feed Association
Oklahoma Sorghum Growers
Oklahoma Wheat Growers Association
Oregon Feed & Grain Association
Oregon Wheat Growers League
Pacific Coast Renderers Association
Pacific Egg and Poultry Association
Pacific Northwest Asia Shippers Association
Pacific Northwest Grain & Feed Association
Pacific Seed Association
Peanut and Tree Nut Processors Association
Pet Food Institute
Plains Cotton Growers, Inc.
Private Railcar Food and Beverage Association
Refrigerated Foods Association
Renew Kansas Biofuels Association
Renewable Fuels Association
Rhode Island Beverage Association
SNAC International
South Carolina Beverage Association
South Dakota Agri-Business Association
Southeastern Grain & Feed Association
Southwest Council of Agribusiness
Soy Transportation Coalition
Specialty Crop Trade Council
Sweetener Users Association
Tennessee Beverage Association
Tennessee Feed and Grain Association
Texas Ag Industries Association
Texas Agricultural Cooperative Council
Texas & Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association
Texas Association of Dairymen
Texas Beverage Association
Texas Cattle Feeders Association
Texas Corn Producers Association
Texas Grain and Feed Association
Texas Poultry Federation
Texas Sheep and Goat Raisers' Association

Texas Soybean Association
Texas Wheat Producers Association
TN Feed & Grain Assn
United Dairymen of Arizona
United Egg Producers
US Canola Association
U.S. Forage Export Council
U.S. Meat Export Federation
US Pea and Lentil Trade Association
U.S. Peanut Federation
U.S. Poultry & Egg Association
US Rice Producers Association
USA Dry Pea and Lentil Council
USA Rice
Utah Beverage Association
Virginia Beverage Association
Washington Association of Wheat Growers
Washington Grain Commission
Washington State Potato Commission
West Virginia Beverage Association
Western Agricultural Processors Association
Western Growers
Western Peanut Growers Association
Wine America
Wine Institute
Wisconsin Agri-Business Association
Wyoming Ag Business Association
Wyoming Wheat Marketing Commission

cc: Senate Environment and Public Works Committee Members
Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee Members
House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Members