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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE,
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April 2, 2014

Mr. Matthew Rose
Executive Chairman
Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway
2650 Lue Menk Drive
Fort Worth, TX 76131

Dear Mr. Rose:

As a follow up to our previous meetings and my staff's continued outreach, I write to reiterate my concerns about the declining rail service South Dakota shippers have faced this winter and are continuing to experience from Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway (BNSF).

As you know, many in South Dakota depend on reliable rail service. It is how farmers, ethanol producers, and other small business owners get their products to domestic and international markets. It is also how these same rail service customers receive critical inputs for their agricultural or manufacturing needs. The disruptions they are facing have very real impacts on their businesses, not only in the short term, but also in their long term ability to run efficiently and profitably.

I certainly understand the toll the long harsh winter has caused the nation's rail system. While there's still a long way to go before things return to normal, I have appreciated BNSF's willingness to work to resolve specific South Dakota shipper needs that have been brought to your attention. I was also pleased to learn that BNSF has hired over 1,000 new employees, acquired additional locomotives and train cars, and spent almost \$350 million in track maintenance and improvements this quarter in an effort to try to resolve these service issues.

As the weather continues to improve nationwide, I encourage BNSF to build upon these efforts and work to ensure South Dakota's shippers receive the reliable service they have come to expect and count on as soon as possible. That being said, I will continue to be in touch to ensure that specific South Dakota shipper issues are brought to your attention so they can be addressed as expeditiously as possible. Thank you for your attention to this important matter and I look forward to continuing to work with you on this issue.

Sincerely,



JOHN THUNE
Ranking Member

cc: Surface Transportation Board