November 3, 2022

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

Speaker Nancy Pelosi U.S. House of Representatives H-232 U.S. Capitol Washington, DC 20515 Republican Leader Mitch McConnell U.S. Senate S-230 U.S. Capitol Washington, DC 20510

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 shipments 1 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

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> 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