

September 13, 2022

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.  
President  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden:

As representatives of America's corn growers and corn refiners, we write to emphasize the harsh consumer impacts that would result from a freight rail work stoppage. We respectfully urge you to stand ready to take prompt action to avoid severe economic damage to U.S. agricultural production, supply chains, and consumer prices. Already, freight rail service disruptions in preparation for a work stoppage are having consequences that will be quick, global, and critically harmful.

The National Corn Growers Association (NCGA) represents nearly 40,000 corn growers and the interests of more than 300,000 farmers. The Corn Refiners Association (CRA) is the national trade association representing the entire corn refining industry of the United States, whose members have an annual economic impact of \$47.5 billion. Corn products are an essential input for the American economy, including food, fuel, animal feed, and a range of consumer and industrial products – the vast majority of products sold in grocery stores.

To serve these essential roles in the U.S. and global economies, corn growers and refiners depend heavily on an efficient, reliable, and affordable rail transportation network to transport our products. Railroads originate 24% of U.S. grain shipments, of which approximately half (691,000 carloads) is corn. Throughout 2022, rail service failures unrelated to a potential work stoppage have routinely disrupted the country's agricultural and food production capabilities. As the deadline for a labor agreement approaches at the end of this week, conditions have become particularly dire.

In preparation for a potential work stoppage, Class I railroads have already halted shipments of ingredients essential to fertilizer production. More than half of the fertilizer shipped in the U.S. moves by rail. With other key fertilizer producing countries crippled by the war in Ukraine, a fertilizer shortage will have far-reaching global effects at a moment when the world relies more than ever on America's ability to address food insecurity. Grain shipments scheduled for Thursday of this week are being cancelled and almost all Class I rail service is expected to halt on Friday. Other rail carriers are expected to discontinue operations shortly after Class I carriers due to connectivity issues.

At home, corn refining plants and other agricultural processors are already stretched to their limit, operating at full capacity, and struggling with railroads' inability to deliver inputs or ship finished products. In the event of a rail strike that would completely shut down the supply chain

for these facilities, there would simply be no capacity to recover lost production. Food price inflation, expected to increase throughout next year, would be significantly exacerbated and particularly devastating for American families that can least afford it.

We respectfully urge you to be prepared to take prompt action to immediately intervene to prevent a freight rail stoppage of any length. Continuous rail service is essential to the American economy and our country's ability to help feed the world. We appreciate your attention to this serious issue.

Sincerely,

John Bode  
President and CEO  
Corn Refiners Association

John Doggett  
CEO  
National Corn Growers Association

Cc: The Honorable Tom Vilsack, Secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture  
The Honorable Marty Walsh, Secretary, U.S. Department of Labor  
The Honorable Pete Buttigieg, Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation