**I****tem 1A. Risk Factors**

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The information set forth in this Item 1A should be read in conjunction with the rest of the information included in this report, including Management’s Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations, Item 7, and Financial Statements and Supplementary Data, Item 8.

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*We Must Manage Fluctuating Demand for Our Services and Network Capacity*– If there are significant reductions in demand for rail services with respect to one or more commodities or changes in consumer preferences that affect the businesses of our customers, we may experience increased costs associated

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with resizing our operations, including higher unit operating costs and costs for the storage of locomotives, rail cars, and other equipment; work-force adjustments; and other related activities, which could have a material adverse effect on our results of operations, financial condition, and liquidity. If there is significant demand for our services that exceeds the designed capacity of our network, we may experience network difficulties, including congestion and reduced velocity, that could compromise the level of service we provide to our customers. This level of demand may also compound the impact of weather and weather-related events on our operations and velocity. Although we continue to improve our transportation plan, add capacity, improve operations at our yards and other facilities, and improve our ability to address surges in demand for any reason with adequate resources, we cannot be sure that these measures will fully or adequately address any service shortcomings resulting from demand exceeding our planned capacity.  We may experience other operational or service difficulties related to network capacity, dramatic and unplanned fluctuations in our customers’ demand for rail service with respect to one or more commodities or operating regions, or other events that could negatively impact our operational efficiency, any of which could have a material adverse effect on our results of operations, financial condition, and liquidity.

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*We Transport Hazardous Materials* – We transport certain hazardous materials and other materials, including crude oil, ethanol, and toxic inhalation hazard (TIH) materials, such as chlorine, that pose certain risks in the event of a release or combustion. Additionally, U.S. laws impose common carrier obligations on railroads that require us to transport certain hazardous materials regardless of risk or potential exposure to loss. A rail accident or other incident or accident on our network, at our facilities, or at the facilities of our customers involving the release or combustion of hazardous materials could involve significant costs and claims for personal injury, property damage, and environmental penalties and remediation in excess of our insurance coverage for these risks, which could have a material adverse effect on our results of operations, financial condition, and liquidity.

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*We Are Subject to Significant Governmental Regulation*– We are subject to governmental regulation by a significant number of federal, state, and local authorities covering a variety of health, safety, labor, environmental, economic (as discussed below), and other matters.  Many laws and regulations require us to obtain and maintain various licenses, permits, and other authorizations, and we cannot guarantee that we will continue to be able to do so. Our failure to comply with applicable laws and regulations could have a material adverse effect on us. Governments or regulators may change the legislative or regulatory frameworks within which we operate without providing us any recourse to address any adverse effects on our business, including, without limitation, regulatory determinations or rules regarding dispute resolution, increasing the amount of our traffic subject to common carrier regulation, business relationships with other railroads, calculation of our cost of capital or other inputs relevant to computing our revenue adequacy, the prices we charge, and costs and expenses. Significant legislative activity in Congress or regulatory activity by the STB could expand regulation of railroad operations and prices for rail services, which could reduce capital spending on our rail network, facilities and equipment and have a material adverse effect on our results of operations, financial condition, and liquidity. As part of the Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008, rail carriers were to implement PTC by the end of 2015 (the Rail Safety Improvement Act).  The Surface Transportation Extension Act of 2015 amended the Rail Safety Improvement Act to require implementation of PTC by the end of 2018, which deadline may be extended to December 31, 2020, provided certain other criteria are satisfied.  On December 10, 2018, we received approval from the FRA for an alternative schedule to implement, test and refine our PTC during 2019-2020.  Final implementation of PTC will require us to adapt and integrate our system with other railroads whose implementation plan may be different than ours.  This implementation could have a material adverse effect on our results of operations and financial condition. Additionally, one or more consolidations of Class I railroads could also lead to increased regulation of the rail industry.

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*We May Be Affected by General Economic Conditions*– Prolonged severe adverse domestic and global economic conditions or disruptions of financial and credit markets may affect the producers and consumers of the commodities we carry and may have a material adverse effect on our access to liquidity and our results of operations and financial condition.

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*We Face Competition from Other Railroads and Other Transportation Providers* – We face competition from other railroads, motor carriers, ships, barges, and pipelines. In addition to price competition, we face competition with respect to transit times and quality and reliability of service. We must build or acquire and maintain our rail system, while trucks, barges and maritime operators are able to use public rights-of-way maintained by public entities. Any future improvements or expenditures materially increasing the quality or reducing the cost of alternative modes of transportation, or legislation that eliminates or significantly increases the size or weight limitations currently applicable to motor carriers, could have a material adverse

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effect on our results of operations, financial condition, and liquidity. Additionally, any future consolidation of the rail industry could materially affect the competitive environment in which we operate.

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*We Rely on Technology and Technology Improvements in Our Business Operations* – We rely on information technology in all aspects of our business. If we do not have sufficient capital to acquire new technology or if we are unable to develop or implement new technology such as PTC or the latest version of our transportation control systems, we may suffer a competitive disadvantage within the rail industry and with companies providing other modes of transportation service, which could have a material adverse effect on our results of operations, financial condition, and liquidity. Additionally, if a cyber attack or other event causes significant disruption or failure of one or more of our information technology systems, including computer hardware, software, and communications equipment, we could suffer a significant service interruption, safety failure, security breach, or other operational difficulties, which could have a material adverse impact on our results of operations, financial condition, and liquidity.

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*We May Be Subject to Various Claims and Lawsuits That Could Result in Significant Expenditures*– As a railroad with operations in densely populated urban areas and other cities and a vast rail network, we are exposed to the potential for various claims and litigation related to labor and employment, personal injury, property damage, environmental liability, and other matters. Any material changes to litigation trends or a catastrophic rail accident or series of accidents involving any or all of property damage, personal injury, and environmental liability that exceed our insurance coverage for such risks could have a material adverse effect on our results of operations, financial condition, and liquidity.

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*We Are Subject to Significant Environmental Laws and Regulations* – Due to the nature of the railroad business, our operations are subject to extensive federal, state, and local environmental laws and regulations concerning, among other things, emissions to the air; discharges to waters; handling, storage, transportation, disposal of waste and other materials; and hazardous material or petroleum releases. We generate and transport hazardous and non-hazardous waste in our operations, and we did so in our former operations. Environmental liability can extend to previously owned or operated properties, leased properties, and properties owned by third parties, as well as to properties we currently own. Environmental liabilities have arisen and may also arise from claims asserted by adjacent landowners or other third parties in toxic tort litigation. We have been and may be subject to allegations or findings that we have violated, or are strictly liable under, these laws or regulations. We currently have certain obligations at existing sites for investigation, remediation and monitoring, and we likely will have obligations at other sites in the future.  Liabilities for these obligations affect our estimate based on our experience and, as necessary, the advice and assistance of our consultants.  However, actual costs may vary from our estimates due to any or all of several factors, including changes to environmental laws or interpretations of such laws, technological changes affecting investigations and remediation, the participation and financial viability of other parties responsible for any such liability and the corrective action or change to corrective actions required to remediate any existing or future sites. We could incur significant costs as a result of any of the foregoing, and we may be required to incur significant expenses to investigate and remediate known, unknown, or future environmental contamination, which could have a material adverse effect on our results of operations, financial condition, and liquidity.

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*We May Be Affected by Climate Change and Market or Regulatory Responses to Climate Change* – Climate change, including the impact of global warming, could have a material adverse effect on our results of operations, financial condition, and liquidity.  Restrictions, caps, taxes, or other controls on emissions of greenhouse gasses, including diesel exhaust, could significantly increase our operating costs.  Restrictions on emissions could also affect our customers that (a) use commodities that we carry to produce energy, (b) use significant amounts of energy in producing or delivering the commodities we carry, or (c) manufacture or produce goods that consume significant amounts of energy or burn fossil fuels, including chemical producers, farmers and food producers, and automakers and other manufacturers.  Significant cost increases, government regulation, or changes of consumer preferences for goods or services relating to alternative sources of energy or emissions reductions could materially affect the markets for the commodities we carry, which in turn could have a material adverse effect on our results of operations, financial condition, and liquidity.  Government incentives encouraging the use of alternative sources of energy could also affect certain of our customers and the markets for certain of the commodities we carry in an unpredictable manner that could alter our traffic patterns, including, for example, increasing royalties charged to producers of PRB coal by the U.S. Department of Interior and the impacts of ethanol incentives on farming and ethanol producers. Finally, we could face increased costs related to defending and resolving legal claims and other litigation related to climate change and the alleged impact of our operations on climate change.  Any of these factors, individually or in operation with one or more of the other factors, or

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other unforeseen impacts of climate change could reduce the amount of traffic we handle and have a material adverse effect on our results of operations, financial condition, and liquidity.

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*Severe Weather Could Result in Significant Business Interruptions and Expenditures*– As a railroad with a vast network, we are exposed to severe weather conditions and other natural phenomena, including earthquakes, hurricanes, fires, floods, mudslides or landslides, extreme temperatures, and significant precipitation. Line outages and other interruptions caused by these conditions can adversely affect our entire rail network and can adversely affect revenue, costs, and liabilities, which could have a material adverse effect on our results of operations, financial condition, and liquidity.

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*Strikes or Work Stoppages Could Adversely Affect Our Operations* – The U.S. Class I railroads are party to collective bargaining agreements with various labor unions. The majority of our employees belong to labor unions and are subject to these agreements. Disputes with regard to the terms of these agreements or our potential inability to negotiate acceptable contracts with these unions could result in, among other things, strikes, work stoppages, slowdowns, or lockouts, which could cause a significant disruption of our operations and have a material adverse effect on our results of operations, financial condition, and liquidity. Additionally, future national labor agreements, or renegotiation of labor agreements or provisions of labor agreements, could compromise our service reliability or significantly increase our costs for health care, wages, and other benefits, which could have a material adverse impact on our results of operations, financial condition, and liquidity.  Labor disputes, work stoppages, slowdowns or lockouts at loading/unloading facilities, ports or other transport access points could compromise our service reliability and have a material adverse impact on our results of operations, financial condition, and liquidity.  Labor disputes, work stoppages, slowdowns or lockouts by employees of our customers or our suppliers could compromise our service reliability and have a material adverse impact on our results of operations, financial condition, and liquidity.

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*The Availability of Qualified Personnel Could Adversely Affect Our Operations* – Changes in demographics, training requirements, and the availability of qualified personnel could negatively affect our ability to meet demand for rail service. Unpredictable increases in demand for rail services and a lack of network fluidity may exacerbate such risks, which could have a negative impact on our operational efficiency and otherwise have a material adverse effect on our results of operations, financial condition, and liquidity.

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*We May Be Affected By Fluctuating Fuel Prices* – Fuel costs constitute a significant portion of our transportation expenses. Diesel fuel prices can be subject to dramatic fluctuations, and significant price increases could have a material adverse effect on our operating results. Although we currently are able to recover a significant amount of our fuel expenses from our customers through revenue from fuel surcharges, we cannot be certain that we will always be able to mitigate rising or elevated fuel costs through our fuel surcharges. Additionally, future market conditions or legislative or regulatory activities could adversely affect our ability to apply fuel surcharges or adequately recover increased fuel costs through fuel surcharges. As fuel prices fluctuate, our fuel surcharge programs trail such fluctuations in fuel price by approximately two months, and may be a significant source of quarter-over-quarter and year-over-year volatility, particularly in periods of rapidly changing prices. International, political, and economic factors, events and conditions affect the volatility of fuel prices and supplies. Weather can also affect fuel supplies and limit domestic refining capacity. A severe shortage of, or disruption to, domestic fuel supplies could have a material adverse effect on our results of operations, financial condition, and liquidity.  Alternatively, lower fuel prices could have a positive impact on the economy by increasing consumer discretionary spending that potentially could increase demand for various consumer products we transport. However, lower fuel prices could have a negative impact on other commodities we transport, such as coal and domestic drilling-related shipments, which could have a material adverse effect on our results of operations, financial condition, and liquidity.

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*We Utilize Capital Markets* – Due to the significant capital expenditures required to operate and maintain a safe and efficient railroad, we rely on the capital markets to provide some of our capital requirements.  We utilize long-term debt instruments, bank financing and commercial paper from time-to-time, and we pledge certain of our receivables.  Significant instability or disruptions of the capital markets, including the credit markets, or deterioration of our financial condition due to internal or external factors could restrict or prohibit our access to, and significantly increase the cost of, commercial paper and other financing sources, including bank credit facilities and the issuance of long-term debt, including corporate bonds. A significant deterioration of our financial condition could result in a reduction of our credit rating to below investment grade, which could restrict, or at certain credit levels below investment grade may prohibit us, from utilizing our current receivables securitization facility. This may also limit our access to external sources of capital and significantly increase the costs of short and long-term debt financing.

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*A Significant Portion of Our Revenue Involves Transportation of Commodities to and from International Markets* – Although revenues from our operations are attributable to transportation services provided in the U.S., a significant portion of our revenues involves the transportation of commodities to and from international markets, including Mexico and Southeast Asia, by various carriers and, at times, various modes of transportation. Significant and sustained interruptions of trade with Mexico or countries in Southeast Asia, including China, could adversely affect customers and other entities that, directly or indirectly, purchase or rely on rail transportation services in the U.S. as part of their operations, and any such interruptions could have a material adverse effect on our results of operations, financial condition and liquidity. Any one or more of the following could cause a significant and sustained interruption of trade with Mexico or countries in Southeast Asia: (a) a deterioration of security for international trade and businesses; (b) the adverse impact of new laws, rules and regulations or the interpretation of laws, rules and regulations by government entities, courts or regulatory bodies, including modifications to the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) or its proposed successor called the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) and actions of taxing authorities that affect our customers doing business in foreign countries; (c) any significant adverse economic developments, such as extended periods of high inflation, material disruptions in the banking sector or in the capital markets of these foreign countries, and significant changes in the valuation of the currencies of these foreign countries that could materially affect the cost or value of imports or exports; (d) shifts in patterns of international trade that adversely affect import and export markets; and (e) a material reduction in foreign direct investment in these countries.

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*We Are Subject to Legislative, Regulatory, and Legal Developments Involving Taxes*– Taxes are a significant part of our expenses.  We are subject to U.S. federal, state, and foreign income, payroll, property, sales and use, fuel, and other types of taxes. Changes in tax rates, such as those included in the U.S. Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, enactment of new tax laws, revisions of tax regulations, and claims or litigation with taxing authorities could result in a material effect to our results of operations, financial condition, and liquidity.  Higher tax rates could have a material adverse effect on our results of operations, financial condition, and liquidity.

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*We Are Dependent on Certain Key Suppliers of Locomotives and Rail*– Due to the capital intensive nature and sophistication of locomotive equipment, parts and maintenance, potential new suppliers face high barriers to entry.  Therefore, if one of the domestic suppliers of high horsepower locomotives discontinues manufacturing locomotives, supplying parts or providing maintenance for any reason, including bankruptcy or insolvency, we could experience significant cost increases and reduced availability of the locomotives that are necessary for our operations.  Additionally, for a high percentage of our rail purchases, we utilize two steel producers (one domestic and one international) that meet our specifications.  Rail is critical to our operations for rail replacement programs, maintenance, and for adding additional network capacity, new rail and storage yards, and expansions of existing facilities.  This industry similarly has high barriers to entry, and if one of these suppliers discontinues operations for any reason, including bankruptcy or insolvency, we could experience both significant cost increases for rail purchases and difficulty obtaining sufficient rail for maintenance and other projects.

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*We May Be Affected by Acts of Terrorism, War, or Risk of War*– Our rail lines, facilities, and equipment, including rail cars carrying hazardous materials, could be direct targets or indirect casualties of terrorist attacks. Terrorist attacks, or other similar events, any government response thereto, and war or risk of war may adversely affect our results of operations, financial condition, and liquidity. In addition, insurance premiums for some or all of our current coverages could increase dramatically, or certain coverages may not be available to us in the future.