



NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

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DOLE SAYS RE-INSTatement OF WICHITA ICC OFFICE NEEDED TO ABET BOXCAR PROBLEM

WASHINGTON -- Sen. Bob Dole (R-Kan.) today called on the chairman of the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) to reinstate the Wichita regional ICC office in light of continuing problems in Kansas caused by a shortage of boxcars which threatens to disrupt this year's harvest.

The Wichita office was recently downgraded in favor of a Washington hotline pilot project. Kansas calls are now referred to the Ft. Worth ICC office, which is not familiar with the railroads and grain situation in Kansas.

"A shortage of boxcars in the wheat producing areas of Kansas continues to endanger this year's harvest," Dole said in a letter to Chairman A. Daniel O'Neal. "Millions of bushels of wheat are being stored on the ground because elevators are full and railroads are unable to provide sufficient numbers of boxcars to handle the grain. I am familiar with 19 communities which are piling wheat on the ground at elevators. In addition, many farmers are storing wheat on the ground at their own farms.

"I have worked with the ICC in attempting to deal with individual problems. However, the downgraded role of the Wichita ICC office is making this difficult. The newly-instituted Washington hotline pilot project is not working. Calls to Washington are referred to the Ft. Worth ICC office, which is not familiar with the railroads and grain situation in Kansas. The staff of the Wichita office, on the other hand, is intimately familiar with the needs of Kansas and has been vastly more helpful in resolving problems."

Dole urged O'Neal to "re-instate the Wichita office and other regional ICC offices to their full role in meeting the needs of harvesters and elevator operators in Kansas. The need is urgent, so action must be taken quickly."