

September 2026

Freight Classification Development Center

1001 North Fairfax Street, Suite 600

Alexandria, VA 22314

Via Email: FCDC@nmfta.org

Re: Docket 2026-2, Subject 1

Item (Rule) 640 – Mixed Shipments and Articles Classified by Weight or Quantity

To the Freight Classification Development Center:

I respectfully submit the following comments regarding the proposed amendments to Item (Rule) 640, Mixed Shipments and Articles Classified by Weight or Quantity.

Our company ships a substantial volume of mixed-commodity LTL freight. Many shipments are tendered on pallets containing multiple products with varying NMFC classifications. A significant portion of these products are currently classified under density-based provisions, while others are regulated hazardous materials that move under NMFC items bearing the Bomburst (∞) symbol or other provisions based on handling, stowability, liability, packaging, or factors other than density.

Under the current provisions of Item 640, Section 3(b), mixed commodities may be unitized on pallets and continue to be rated according to their individual classifications when the commodities are separately identified and weighted on the bill of lading and supporting documentation. This process reflects the operational realities of manufacturers and distributors that routinely consolidate multiple products onto a single handling unit.

The proposed amendment appears to eliminate the current separate-rating methodology and replace it with handling-unit density classification, except where a pallet contains an article bearing the HS&L symbol, Bomburst symbol, or a classification based on factors other than density. In those cases, the entire handling unit would be assessed at the class provided for the highest-classed article on the pallet.

We respectfully request clarification regarding the intent and anticipated impact of this change.

Shippers of hazardous materials are required by federal regulations to specifically identify hazardous commodities on shipping papers. As a result, many shippers already maintain detailed commodity-level information, weights, and descriptions for products tendered on mixed pallets. In our experience, the operational burden of identifying individual commodities has already been accepted as a necessary component of regulatory compliance. Eliminating the ability to rate separately identified commodities according to their applicable classifications appears inconsistent with those existing documentation requirements.

Additionally, Subject 2 of Docket 2026-2 proposes to clarify that when a commodity is regulated by the U.S. Department of Transportation as hazardous, an NMFC item bearing the Bomburst (∞) symbol takes precedence over an item that does not bear the symbol.

If hazardous commodities must continue to be specifically identified and classified under Bomburst-designated provisions, it is unclear why density-rated, non-hazardous commodities on the same pallet should lose the benefit of their otherwise applicable classifications when all commodities remain separately identified and documented.

Accordingly, we respectfully request that the FDCD consider retaining language similar to current Item 640, Section 3(b), for mixed pallets where:

- Individual commodities are identified on the bill of lading;
- Commodity-specific weights are provided;
- Hazardous materials are properly identified in accordance with applicable regulations; and
- Freight is tendered in compliance with applicable NMFC packaging requirements.

Absent such a provision, the proposal may unintentionally increase transportation costs for shippers that consolidate hazardous and non-hazardous products on the same pallet, despite maintaining the detailed documentation currently required for both regulatory compliance and freight classification purposes.

Furthermore, the proposed rule may discourage pallet consolidation and encourage the segregation of hazardous and non-hazardous products onto separate pallets solely for classification purposes. This could result in additional handling, increased pallet counts, reduced trailer utilization, higher transportation costs, and potentially greater transportation inefficiencies without a corresponding improvement in safety, handling, stowability, or liability outcomes. The result may be more shipments, more handling units, and less efficient use of transportation capacity while providing limited practical benefit to carriers or shippers.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments and for the opportunity to participate in the classification development process.

Respectfully submitted,

Greg Recker
Distribution Manager
Betco Corporation