REPORT NO. CR-2026-11 · NOVEMBER 15, 2026

THE REPRICING ECONOMY

How 2026's carrier-cost shock breaks lowball car-shipping quotes, and who pays when the board cannot clear. A reference investigation with BMC-84 bond mechanics, FMCSA penalty rules, first-party 2026 shipment data, documented repricing files from researched profiles, and the live trade-secret docket Montway v. Navi (D. Del.).

PUBLISHED BY
CARFREIGHT.REVIEW RESEARCH DESK

DATE
NOVEMBER 15, 2026

TYPE
REFERENCE INVESTIGATION (DESK RESEARCH)

LICENSE
FREE TO SHARE WITH ATTRIBUTION

LENGTH
16-MINUTE READ

CONTACT
CARFREIGHT.REVIEW/CONTACT

CONTENTS

Executive Findings 01–04

Section 01, The Cost Shock of 2026

Section 02, The Mechanism: Why the Lowball Quote Fails

Section 03, The Complaint File: Our Researched Profiles

Section 04, The Weak Referee: What FMCSA Does, and Cannot

Section 05, The Corporate Brawl: Montway v. Navi (D. Del., 2026)

Section 06, What You Should Do Before Booking

Sources (all read Nov 15, 2026)

Method & Right of Reply

THE NUMBERS AT A GLANCE

$6.53
DIESEL $/GAL NATIONAL RECORD (SEP 21, 2026)

$6.127
DIESEL $/GAL NOV 9, 2026 (EIA)

+22.8%
CARRIER PAY / MILE H1 2026 YOY

+14.6%
CONSUMER PRICE / MILE H1 2026 YOY

1,353
BBB COMPLAINTS (3-YR), 31 RESEARCHED PROFILES

4,481
NCCDB MOVING COMPLAINTS, 2025 (PEAK 9,128 IN 2021)

EXECUTIVE FINDINGS

FINDING 01

THE SHOCK IS REAL.

Carrier pay per mile rose 22.8% in H1 2026 vs 2025 after two flat years; consumer prices rose 14.6%. Diesel averaged $6.13–$6.53/gal (record Sep 21), ~$2.50 above a year earlier.

FINDING 02

THE BOARD IS THE REFEREE.

Brokers post loads; carriers accept above clearing price. Published per-mile spreads run $0.33–$2.00 (RoadRunner 2026) and $2.04→$0.55 by distance band (SGT). Below the band, the load sits.

FINDING 03

THE CONSUMER HOLDS THE BAG.

Documented repricing across our own profiles: Sonic ($800→$1,850; $900→$2,100+), Safeeds ($500→$1,300), Royal ($700→$1,200 at delivery). 170 / 46 / 6 BBB complaints respectively (and SGT: 185).

FINDING 04

THE REFEREE IS WEAK.

FMCSA sets no price. Brokers owe a $75,000 BMC-84 bond (raised from $10,000 by MAP-21, 2013); the 2026 rule tightened replenishment and immediate suspension. NCCDB complaints halved from 9,128 (2021) to 4,481 (2025), under-enforcement persists.

SECTION 01, THE COST SHOCK OF 2026

Fuel first. EIA's weekly survey put on-highway diesel at a record $6.53/gal on Sep 21, 2026; on Nov 9 it read $6.127 (down $0.165 w/w, still ~$2.29 above a year earlier). Capital Press reported Rockies diesel at an all-time-high $6.52 on Oct 26, and California peaked at $8.25 (AAA: $8.51 Oct 18). No car-hauler operator missed this.

Transmission to price came fast. SGT Auto Transport's *State of Auto Transport 2026* (Sep 9, 2026; first-party data, mix-adjusted; paid-search and affiliate channels excluded) found carrier pay per mile rose 22.8% YoY in H1 2026 after two flat years, broad across distance bands (+21.3% to +23.9%). Consumer prices rose 14.6% over the same period. Super Dispatch's 2026 report pegs per-mile costs by haul type at ~$5.14 intra-city, ~$2.35 intra-region, ~$1.82 inter-region, ~$0.85 long-haul.

Auto transport is a **bid-cleared spot market**: every shipment is a load; every load clears where carrier supply meets bid demand on that lane. When the cost of supply jumps 23% while quotes stay anchored to 2024 habits, loads do not clear. They do not fly. They sit.

SECTION 02, THE MECHANISM: WHY THE LOWBALL QUOTE FAILS

A consumer books online. The site produces an estimate: $800 for 1,400 miles. That number is not a price, it is a **bid** the broker posts to a private clearing exchange, predominantly **Central Dispatch**. Carriers see it and either accept or ignore it.

Published 2026 spreads: RoadRunner's shipment data show per-mile rates from **$0.33 to $2.00** (median $1.23 at a 987-mile average, $1,215 average); Move.org's testing found **$1.89/mile open, $2.82 enclosed**; SGT's bands run **$2.04/mi** (100–499 mi) down to **$0.55/mi** (2,500+ mi). An estimate below the band does not fail loudly, it **fails silently**: no carrier accepts, windows slip, and the broker calls with a revised number before pickup.

> *If carrier pay is ~$0.75/mi for 1,500–1,999 miles and your quote implies $0.55, the load mathematically cannot clear on that board, so someone pays the difference. Usually the consumer, after the deposit is already charged.*

CompareTheCarrier's 2026 red-flag guidance (an industry-side source, not ours) calls the pattern plainly: **a quote 30%+ below market is a bait-and-switch setup**, price increases after booking; the contract says "estimate / subject to change"; victims frequently pay $500–$2,000 adjustments at pickup. Rapid Auto Shipping's 2026 guide puts individual victim losses at **$500–$5,000 per incident** for bait-and-switch schemes.

SECTION 03, THE COMPLAINT FILE: OUR OWN RESEARCHED PROFILES

COMPANY	DOCUMENTED REPRICING (AS READ NOV 2026)	BBB COMPLAINTS (3 YR)
Sonic Auto Transportation	$800 → $1,850/$1,950; $900 → $2,100+; Sonic cites price-variability clause (term L); 159 answered / 11 resolved	170 (59 in 12 months)
Safeeds Transport	$500 quote → $1,300 demand (non-binding-quote / price-variability structure); 10/21/2026 complaint: $1,199 contract vs $1,500 Cash App collected, Unanswered at read	46 (20 in 12 months)
Royal Auto Ship	$700 contracted → $1,200 demanded at release (04/22/2026); $300 Zelle deposit, no carrier assigned → full refund after escalation (03/04/2026)	6 (3 answered / 3 resolved)
SGT Auto Transport	"Pricing increases after booking"; renegotiation near pickup citing fuel/demand; $199 cancellation flashpoint (Chester M., Apr 2026, billing mismatch)	185
Scale check, all 31 profiles	BBB (3-yr window), counts attributed per company: Montway 289 · SGT 185 · Sonic 170 · Nexus 162 · RoadRunner 138 · uShip 78 · Zero in three profiles (American Auto Transporters, Corsia Logistics, Ship A Car)	**1,353 total**

SECTION 04, THE WEAK REFEREE: WHAT FMCSA DOES, AND CANNOT

FMCSA regulates the *structure* of the deal, not the *number*. Property brokers must hold authority and a **$75,000 surety bond (BMC-84) or trust fund (BMC-85)**, the MAP-21 level, raised from **$10,000** effective Oct 1, 2013 (and $25,000 for household-goods brokers). Congress raised it because $10,000 did not deter under-capitalized brokers; it still does not deter reprice-before-pickup conduct inside compliant brokers.

The 2026 tightening helps at the margins: FMCSA's Nov 2023 financial-responsibility rule (largely effective Jan 16, 2026) requires brokers' assets be **"readily available"**, defined sound institutions behind the bond/fund, **automatic immediate suspension** authority for inadequate security, and a **seven-day replenishment** window for claims. Failing to pay a civil penalty within 90 days of a final order suspends registration (49 CFR § 386.84); Appendix B sets operating-without-authority minimum at **$13,676 per violation** (household-goods brokers **$39,615**) with 12–36-month registration suspensions.

Volume tells you where enforcement sits. FMCSA's National Consumer Complaint Database recorded **9,128 moving complaints in 2021** (post-pandemic spike) and **4,481 in 2025**, still above 2019, per a Trunk analysis of FMCSA's published NCCDB statistics (Jun–Jul 2026). FMCSA does not publish by category; Trunk built them by scraping Protect Your Move records. Treat the trend as directional, not as a court finding.

> *No federal rule sets or approves a consumer's car-shipping price; no federal rule voids a repriced estimate; and no $75,000 bond is a meaningful recovery source against a broker whose fee on your load is $150–$250. The law allocates risk; it does not remove it.*

SECTION 05, THE CORPORATE BRAWL: MONTWAY V. NAVI (D. DEL., 2026)

The undercutting economy is serious enough to litigate over. In **Montway LLC v. Navi Transport Services LLC**, No. 25-cv-00381 (D. Del.), Montway, among the country's largest auto-transport brokers, accused former employees, Navi Auto Transport and its backers of **misappropriating trade secrets** (lead lists) and openly undercutting Montway's quotes via **below-market bids** posted to the board. Opinion issued **March 30, 2026**; the court's Nov 2025 ruling let federal Defend Trade Secrets Act claims proceed (state claims narrowed). Central Dispatch appears in the record.

PRECISE FOR READERS

These are **allegations in an active dispute**, not findings of wrongdoing by either party. But the docket proves the market's structure: leads, quotes and the board are the same asset and the same battlefield; undercutting below market is not a rumor, it is conduct parties are litigating in federal court this year.

For consumers, the practical read is stranger still: in a market where undercutting is routine and litigation-worthy, the "best" price you see is quite possibly a **losing bid**, one no carrier will accept. That is not a deal; that is a stall with a deposit attached.

SECTION 06, WHAT YOU SHOULD DO BEFORE BOOKING

1 · BENCHMARK THE ESTIMATE

Against published 2026 bands (SGT: ~$0.89/mi at 1,000–1,499 mi; ~$0.75 at 1,500–1,999; ~$0.63 at 2,000–2,499; ~$0.55 at 2,500+) and MoveAdvisor's route table. If a quote sits far below the band, treat the difference as the price you will be asked to pay later, not a bargain.

2 · DEMAND CARRIER ACCEPTANCE BEFORE CHARGE

Your deposit ($0–$250 in reputable practice) should trigger on a signed rate confirmation, never on card authorization.

3 · VERIFY THE COMPANY, NOT THE BRANDING

SAFER + L&I exact status, bond evidence and officials, 5 minutes from our profile dossiers at carfreight.review/reviews/.

4 · READ THE CANCELLATION TRIGGER

Sonic: once assignment is shared · Corsia: $129 · Royal: $199 after acceptance · WeShipCars: $199 cap · Auto Shipping Group: $129. Your exit price is set before your car exists on anyone's truck.

5 · GET THE REPRICING CLAUSE CAPPED

With a stated maximum and trigger conditions. A price-variability clause with no cap is an open checkbook.

6 · IF REPRICED AT PICKUP

Refuse, escalate, document: photograph the conversation, the BOL and the rate sheet; demand the trigger clause; use the FCBA chargeback / BMC-84 sequence, see carfreight.review/refund-policy/ and the BBB complaint index at /complaints/.

SOURCES (ALL READ NOVEMBER 15, 2026)

[01] SGT Auto Transport, *The State of Auto Transport 2026*, sgtautotransport.com/autoblog/car-shipping-trends/the-state-of-auto-transport-2026, first-party data, mix-adjusted; paid-search/affiliate excluded.

[02] PR Newswire, SGT publishes The State of Auto Transport 2026, Sept 9, 2026, prnewswire.com/news-releases/sgt-auto-transport-publishes-the-state-of-auto-transport-2026-302873640.html

[03] MoveAdvisor, How Much Does It Cost to Ship a Car in 2026?, moveadvisor.com/move/how-much-does-it-cost-to-ship-a-car/, $1,150 avg ($0.60–$1.95/mi).

[04] Move.org, Vehicle Transport Costs 2026, move.org/vehicle-transport-costs/, ~$1,300 avg; open ~$914 ($1.89/mi); enclosed ~$1,342 ($2.82/mi).

[05] RoadRunner, 2026 Shipment Data & Calculator, roadrunnerautotransport.com/car-shipping-calculator, median $1,215; $1.23/mi; $0.33–$2.00/mi.

[06] Super Dispatch, 2026 Auto Transport Industry Report, superdispatch.com/auto-transport-industry-report-statistics/

[07] U.S. EIA, Gasoline & Diesel Fuel Update, eia.gov/petroleum/gasdiesel/, $6.127/gal on-highway diesel (Nov 9, 2026).

[08] Capital Press, On-highway diesel elevated; Rockies record $6.52, capitalpress.com, Oct 27, 2026, CA $8.25 record Sep 21; AAA $8.51 Oct 18.

[09] Trunk (Lorea.ai), Moving-company complaints analysis of FMCSA NCCDB, trunk.lorea.ai/insights/hostage-loads-2026, 9,128 (2021) → 4,481 (2025).

[10] Federal Register, Broker & Freight Forwarder Financial Responsibility (Nov 16, 2023; 2023-25312), federalregister.gov, MAP-21 $10k→$75k (2013); rule effective largely Jan 16, 2026; “readily available” assets.

[11] eCFR, Part 386, Appendix B & § 386.84, ecfr.gov, $13,676 / $39,615 minimum penalties; 12–36-month registration suspension.

[12] U.S. District Court (D. Del.), Montway LLC v. Navi Transport Services LLC, No. 25-cv-00381, Opinion March 30, 2026, ded.uscourts.gov/sites/ded/files/opinions/25-381.pdf

[13] National Law Review, Car Shipper’s Federal Claims Survive, Nov 26, 2025, natlawreview.com/article/car-shippers-federal-not-state-trade-secrets-claims-survive-alleged-cross-border

[14] CompareTheCarrier, Auto Transport Companies to Avoid 2026, comparethecarrier.com/blog/auto-transport-companies-to-avoid/, quote 30%+ below market = bait-and-switch setup.

[15] Transportvibe, SGT Auto Transport Review 2026, transportvibe.com/company-reviews/sgt-auto-transport, Oct 19, 2026, “pricing increases after booking”; $199 cancellation flashpoint.

[16] Carfreight.review, 31 company dossiers, carfreight.review/reviews/, BBB read Nov 11–15, 2026; SAFER/L&I live reads; 1,353 complaints (3-yr), attributed per company.

METHOD & RIGHT OF REPLY

This report is desk research of public, citable sources. No interviews were conducted; no consumer complaint text is republished; no broker or carrier was paid to appear. BBB complaint counts are attention markers, not findings of fault. Every figure carries a dated source above. We do not assign trust scores or verdicts. If you

are named here, Sonic, Safeeds, Royal, SGT, Montway, Navi or any linked dossier, you may file a verified rebuttal for publication, unedited, with attribution, via carfreight.review/corrections/. Corrections are published inline with a change note.

Carfreight.review · Report No. CR-2026-11 · Published November 15, 2026 · Contact: carfreight.review/contact · Not legal, financial or tax advice. Where an inconsistency appears between two sources, it is reported as inconsistency, not resolved.