

To All General Chairmen & State Legislative Directors

This is a follow-up to my message dated December 17th where I requested that you keep January 11, 2005 open on your calendars for a critical Section 3 hearing that was tentatively scheduled for that date.

Just a few days before Christmas, the NMB finally formally announced January 11, 2005 as the date for the hearing. However, shortly after that formal announcement, Congressman Oberstar requested that NMB postpone the hearing until February or March when Congress was back in session. The NMB has not, as of today, responded to Mr. Oberstar's request. Consequently, while the hearing is still scheduled for January 11, 2005, we do not know for certain whether it will actually occur on that date.

I thank all of you for your patience and ask that you remain patient just a little longer. We are doing everything we can to get a definite hearing date and when we have that information, we will immediately notify you with respect to scheduling, hotel accommodations, etc.

We have been lobbying vigorously on this issue and arranged for top notch legal testimony at the hearing, but I remain convinced that a strong grass roots demonstration at the hearing will be a key component in our efforts. Thanks again for your patience and rest assured that I will communicate with you further as soon as information becomes available to me.

In Solidarity,

Freddie N. Simpson