



A MESSAGE FROM

Teamsters Rail Conference

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TEAMSTERS RAIL CONFERENCE OFFICIAL TESTIFIES AT CONGRESSIONAL HEARING

Improved Working Conditions and Elimination of Dark Territory Urged

(Washington)—Today, the president of the Teamsters Rail Conference testified at hearing of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee's Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines and Hazardous Materials that rail employees are suffering from fatigue due to staffing levels and over-scheduling and that unsignaled areas of track are a danger that can be easily remedied.

"At a minimum for the operating crafts, such as locomotive engineers, we need to address fatigue by counting limbo time as hours of service; requiring a 10-hour calling time for operating crews and implementing other basic fatigue countermeasures," said Ed Rodzicz, president of the Teamsters Rail Conference. "Limbo time" is the time train operating crews spend waiting for transportation from their duty site to their off duty site.

Maintenance of way employees also are affected by fatigue—due to long commutes, inadequate overnight lodging and lack of manpower, Rodzicz said. For example, a member employed on a Union Pacific System Production Crew is required to report for assignments anywhere on the more than 32,000-mile route system encompassing 23 states and covering two-thirds of the territory of the United States from New Orleans to Los Angeles and from Los Angeles to Portland or Chicago.

"The Teamsters Rail Conference believes that the solution to these excessive fatigue-inducing conditions is to reinstate some reasonable limits on the size of territory these workers have to cover," Rodzicz said.

As part of the re-authorization of the Federal Rail Safety Program, the Teamsters Rail Conference believes the ongoing program concerning main track switches in "dark territory"—routes that have no signal system—should be addressed. Misaligned switches have been involved in several fatal rail accidents in recent years, while off-the-shelf switch position detection technology has been available for some time.

The Teamsters Rail Conference represents more than 70,000 locomotive engineers, trainmen and maintenance of way employees on freight, passenger and commuter rail lines across the United States. The Rail Conference is a division of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters.