



A MESSAGE FROM

Teamsters Rail Conference

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TEAMSTERS RALLY FOR FAIRNESS AT AMTRAK

Workers Surround Amtrak Headquarters To Protest Working Without Contract For 8 Years

(Washington, D.C.) – Hundreds of Amtrak workers rallied today at Amtrak's headquarters at Union Station, expressing frustration about working without a union contract for eight years with no negotiations on the horizon.

"These are the longest and worst negotiations I have ever been through," said Tony Gardner, a 30-year member of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division (BMWED) who works in Philadelphia. "My union brothers and sisters know that Amtrak has been raking in profits for years, but we aren't seeing anything."

Workers at the rally chanted, "Shut Amtrak Down," and held signs that said, "It's the end of the line...No Amtrak Contract...No Amtrak trains."

"We are the backbone of rail labor," said Mark Kenny, chairman of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen's (BLET) Amtrak committee. "The new Democratic majority in Congress recognizes the importance of rail labor. They've introduced landmark legislation, HR 2095, that will address numerous rail issues such as limbo time and the elimination of dark territory. We hope they will soon address Amtrak."

In addition to the engineers, trainmen, conductors, signalmen and dispatchers at the rally, members of the BMWED, the workers who maintain the tracks, switches and on-site buildings for Amtrak stood along with members of other unions in solidarity.

"I've not seen such solidarity on the Amtrak issue for many years," said BMWED President Fred Simpson. "It's terrific to have the members of the United Transportation Union, the Machinists and others with us today – all united to fight for fair negotiations at Amtrak. We've got to keep bringing this issue to the public and members of Congress."

"We have to say to our Republican colleagues, 'Get Your Hands Off Amtrak,'" said Rep. Elijah Cummings, (D-MD). "You, the workers who keep this railroad running, have been deprived of what you are rightfully due. We are doing everything in our power to preserve Amtrak."

In addition to the rally, several unions announced the formation of a bargaining coalition for Amtrak negotiations. Based on the successful model used for the freight rail negotiations, the bargaining coalition has signed on the BLET, BMWED, National Conference of Firemen and Oilers and the Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen. The coalition is expected to grow as other unions face an evolving situation at Amtrak.

(MORE)

Page 2 of 2/Teamsters Rally for Fairness at Amtrak

“Bargaining as a unified group will put the Amtrak unions on the offensive,” said John Murphy, Director of the Teamsters Rail Conference and Teamsters Vice President. “The time is ripe for a change in negotiating tactics. We’ve seen how the strength of unified bargaining won us a good agreement with the freight railroads. Now is our opportunity to get Amtrak to the table.”

The BLET and BMWED are both divisions of the Teamsters Rail Conference. The Teamsters Union was founded in 1903 and represents 1.4 million hardworking men and women in the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico.