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NEWS CLIPS

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OP-ED CONTRIBUTORS

Trading Away Productivity

By ALAN TONELSON and KEVIN L. KEARNS

Washington

FOR a quarter-century, American economic policy has assumed that the keys to durable national prosperity are deregulation, free trade and a swift transition to a post-industrial, services-dominated future.

Such policies, advocates say, drive innovation, which leads to enormous labor productivity and wage gains — more than enough, supposedly, to make up for the labor disruptions that accompany free trade and de-industrialization.

In reality, though, wage gains for the average worker have lagged behind productivity since the early 1980s, a situation that free-traders usually attribute to workers failing to retrain themselves after seeing their jobs outsourced.

But what if wages lag because productivity itself is being grossly overstated, especially in the nation's manufacturing sector? Then, suddenly, a cornerstone of American economic policy would begin to crumble.

Productivity measures how many worker hours are needed for a given unit of output during a given time period; when hours fall relative to output, labor productivity increases. In 2009, the data show, Americans needed 40 percent fewer hours to produce the same unit of output as in 1980.

But there's a problem: labor productivity figures, which are calculated by the Labor Department, count only worker hours in America, even though American-owned factories and labs have been steadily transplanted overseas, and foreign workers have contributed significantly to the final products counted in productivity measures.

The result is an apparent drop in the number of worker hours required to produce goods — and thus increased productivity. But actually, the total number of worker hours does not necessarily change.

This oversight is no secret: as Labor Department officials acknowledged at a 2004 conference, their statistical methods deem any reduction in the work that goes into creating a specific unit of output, whatever the cause, to be a productivity gain.

This continuing mismeasurement leads economists and all those who rely on them to assume that recorded productivity gains always signify greater efficiency, rather than simple offshoring-generated cost cuts — leaving the rest of us scratching our heads over stagnating wages.

Of course, just because productivity is mismeasured doesn't mean that genuine innovations can't improve living standards. It does mean, however, that Americans are flying blind when it comes to their economy's strengths and weaknesses, and consequently drawing the wrong policy lessons.

Above all, if offshoring has been driving much of our supposed productivity gains, then the case for complete free trade begins to erode. If often such policies simply increase corporate profits at the expense of American workers, with no gains in true productivity, then they don't necessarily strengthen the national economy.

In this regard, the case for free trade as a stimulus for innovation weakens, too. Because productivity gains in part reflect job offshoring, not just the benefits of technology or better business practices, then the American economy has been much less innovative than widely assumed.

How can we actually increase innovation and real productivity? Manufacturing, long slighted by free-market extremists, needs to be promoted, not pushed offshore, since it has historically accounted for the bulk of research and development spending and employs the bulk of American science and technology workers — who in turn spur further innovation and real productivity.

Promoting manufacturing will require major changes in tax and trade policies that currently foster offshoring, including implementing provisions to punish currency manipulation by countries like China and help American producers harmed by discriminatory foreign value-added tax systems. It also means revitalizing government and corporate research and development, which has languished since its heyday in the 1960s.

Much of government policy and business strategy rides on false assumptions about innovation, and although the Obama administration acknowledges the problem, it has done nothing to

correct it. With the economy still in need of government life support and the future of American manufacturing in doubt, relying on faulty productivity data is a formula for disaster.

FedEx labor bill battle on horizon

Congress closer to resolving controversial drivers issue

By Bartholomew Sullivan

Sunday, March 7, 2010

WASHINGTON — The high-stakes endgame in a three-year battle to pass a multiyear Federal Aviation Administration Reauthorization bill is expected to move to the floor of the Senate this week, but all acknowledge a labor issue FedEx has made its highest legislative priority will be resolved behind closed doors.

The language amending the Railway Labor Act to give certain FedEx Express employees the right to form local bargaining units isn't in the Senate bill, but it is in the House version. Even if the Senate passes its bill, there are a variety of ways the issue could be resolved — or stalemated.

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid said Friday he hopes the Senate can get to the measure this week. U.S. Sen. Bob Corker, R-Tenn., has a hold on the bill, meaning it won't be acted on unless there are 60 votes to move forward, but many are clamoring for action. It was unclear Friday how many amendments would need to be debated before a final vote.

Ultimately, one likely avenue would be a conference committee to meld the Senate and House bills, where U.S. Rep. James Oberstar, D-Minn., the chairman of the House Transportation Committee, and the labor measure's chief backer, will have a major say.

FedEx spokesman Maury S. Lane scheduled and canceled two interviews with The Commercial Appeal on Friday before saying, through a Chicago-based public relations firm, that he would not be available to talk about FedEx strategy until Monday. FedEx has been engaged for months in a multimillion-dollar public relations campaign designed to characterize the labor jurisdiction issue as a "Brown bailout" for its rival, United Parcel Service.

UPS, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters and a variety of labor organizations back the change in the law and, in effect, place all package-delivery truck drivers under the jurisdiction of the National Labor Relations Act. The NLRB permits organizing workers by local bargaining unit. Right now, FedEx drivers are under the jurisdiction of the Railway Labor Act, which

requires company employees the more difficult option of holding national elections to form a union.

UPS drivers are already represented by the Teamsters, so the change in the law would likely raise labor costs at FedEx and make it less competitive.

UPS spokesman Malcolm Berkley said the company has continued to educate members of Congress on its position. "We believe all drivers in the country, who are doing the same job, should be treated by the same law. To us, it is literally that simple," he said. He called "bailout" campaign "ridiculous and misleading, at best."

For Memphis, the issue is not simple at all. FedEx is the city's and the state's largest employer, and an engine of economic growth. Dexter Muller, with the Greater Memphis Chamber, said that, over the last several years, "we have told our legislative delegation that almost nothing is more important than that FedEx vote."

Chamber president John Moore added, "We need that company to be strong and have a long-term, viable future." He said he has reached out to Tennessee's senators and will again.

U.S. Sen. Lamar Alexander, R-Tenn., has opposed the Oberstar language right along. "Senator Alexander will keep working with colleagues from both parties to stop Congress from passing legislation that singles out the way FedEx is governed under federal labor laws," his spokesman, Jim Jeffries, said Friday. Corker has taken the same position.

The last FAA bill expired in 2007 and has been given temporary extensions over the years, the last of which expires March 31. The bill contains increased money for airport improvements, upgraded navigational systems, higher pilot training standards and increased safety equipment.

Memphis International Airport President and CEO Larry Cox said Friday that the short bill extensions are "the wrong way to run a railroad, or an airport," and work to increase the costs of airport projects. But he said there are certain items in the House bill that he hopes will be jettisoned, the FedEx labor language in particular, and he hopes that will happen.

"Everything in Washington is about negotiating behind the scenes and working out an arrangement that works for all the parties," he said. "As long as it's an arrangement that's livable for FedEx, I'm fine. ... I'm going to support them down to the bitter end.

"We need a multiyear bill," he added, "but not at any price."

A three-year, \$70 billion bill was passed by the House last May, 277-136, with both U.S. Reps. Steve Cohen, D-Tenn., and Marsha Blackburn, R-Tenn., voting against it. Calling himself "a longtime friend of labor," Cohen explained why he couldn't support the measure.

"I am very concerned about the inclusion of language that seeks to change the laws with respect to only one company, FedEx Express, which is the largest employer in my district. The Federal Express Corp., which includes FedEx Express, employs approximately 30,000 hard-working Memphians," Cohen said.

A two-year Senate bill passed out of the Commerce Committee in July. Even if it passes the full Senate this week, other major differences in the bills, which set aviation policy and long-term goals, will have to be resolved in conference, including the treatment of airline alliances, the federal inspection of foreign repair stations, and the issue of increasing passenger facility charges, which the House bill raised to \$7 from \$4.50.

Both bills raise pilot training standards and call for a review of pilot fatigue issues.

Union Pacific invests in its line between Seattle and Fife



Monday, March 08, 2010

Union Pacific will improve Seattle's transportation infrastructure with a \$5.7-million investment to enhance its track from Seattle to Fife, Wash. Running generally parallel to Interstate 5, this section of Union Pacific track is critical to the movement of goods in Washington and helps keep local and regional economies competitive. The project is under way and will continue through the middle of 2010.

Work will be taking place in and around the cities of Seattle, Tukwila, Renton, Kent, Auburn, Sumner and Fife, representing more than 28 miles of Union Pacific track. When the project is complete, crews will have installed more than 35,000 new railroad ties and spread 9,000 tons of rock ballast to ensure a stable roadbed, improve operating efficiency and enhance railroad safety. Crews will also upgrade 42 public grade crossings as part of the project.

USA TODAY
March 9, 2010

Short-staffed agency overseeing high-speed-rail effort draws fire

BY Matt Kelley

WASHINGTON -- The federal agency in charge of \$8 billion in economic stimulus spending on high-speed-rail projects doesn't have the staff or expertise to properly oversee the money, government investigators and congressional critics say.

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), whose main job until now had been keeping freight and passenger railroads safe, awarded the high-speed-rail grants

in January -- months later than planned.

The top Republican on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee called the award process "amateur hour," saying the agency didn't consult closely enough with elected officials and devoted too much money to projects helping increase speeds on existing Amtrak routes. Rep. John Mica of Florida said he's considering subpoenaing agency records to review its decision-making process.

"I'm very concerned that FRA's work missed the mark, and maybe hijacked the ability of the country to see some true high-speed rail-operations," Mica said in a telephone interview.

The rail agency didn't have enough workers to review applications by states and transportation agencies, causing delays, the Transportation Department inspector general said in a November report. The agency brought in staff from other department offices to help review 214 applications, the report said.

"Our evaluation of the agency's efforts raises significant concerns about its ability to handle these new responsibilities," the Transportation Department investigators wrote.

In a written response to the inspector general's report, Deputy Transportation Secretary John Porcari said the FRA "accomplished an enormous amount in a brief period of time."

"Over the last few months, the FRA has achieved goals that could have taken years in the past," Porcari wrote.

Agency spokesman Mark Paustenbach said the agency's policy is to be as open as possible about its decision-making process.

"Our biggest priority at the moment is to finalize agreements with states so that projects can begin and jobs can be created," Paustenbach said in an e-mail.

In 2008, Congress passed legislation directing the FRA to develop a national high-speed-rail plan. Before that plan was complete, however, the February 2009 stimulus law gave the agency the job of distributing high-speed-rail money. "Usually you design the program and then you get the money," said Stephen Van Beek of the non-partisan Eno Transportation Foundation. "Similar to other programs in the Recovery Act, this was a case where you got the money and you had to design the program around it."

In budget documents, the agency says that it added 27 workers this year and that the Obama administration is seeking \$4.5 million from Congress to add 62 more staff positions to the agency next year, a 7% increase over the current 917 employees.

"It's an agency which, at its top, has some really good people," said Emil Frankel, a former top transportation policy official in the Bush administration who is now director of transportation policy for the Bipartisan Policy Center.

"But they'll have to develop some additional depth."

Paustenbach said the agency will be able to handle its workload with the additional employees and the experts "loaned" from other agencies.

"Our dedicated FRA staff has already been successful," Paustenbach said.

President Obama has touted high-speed rail as a high-tech, energy-efficient transportation option. The largest share of the \$8 billion in grants awarded in January went to California, which got \$2.3 billion for a 220-mph route between Los Angeles and San Francisco, and Florida, which got \$1.3 billion to develop a 168-mph rail corridor between Tampa and Orlando.

Most of the rest went to smaller projects to increase speeds on Amtrak routes or plan for future projects in 11 other rail corridors linking large cities.

Congress added \$2.5 billion more for high-speed rail to the Transportation Department's 2010 budget, and the White House has asked for \$1 billion more next year.

3/9/2010 Settlement

NS to pay \$4 million in federal fines for Graniteville accident

[Norfolk Southern Railway](#) has agreed to pay \$4 million in federal fines to resolve alleged Clean Water Act and hazardous-material law violations associated with a 2005 train accident and chlorine spill in Graniteville, S.C., the U.S. Justice Department and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced yesterday.

On Jan. 6, 2005, a NS train derailed in Graniteville, puncturing tank cars that released chlorine gas. Nine people died as a result of chlorine exposure, hundreds more sought medical care because of respiratory distress and more than 5,000 residents evacuated an area within one mile of the derailment, according to the EPA. In addition, two locomotives involved in the accident leaked diesel fuel, a portion of which flowed into Horse Creek, the agency said.

Under the settlement terms, NS will provide incident command system training to environmental and transportation personnel; stock a nearby pond with at least 3,000 fish to replace those killed by the chlorine spill; and post a telephone number for the National Response Center to facilitate spill reporting. The settlement also includes a supplemental environmental project valued at \$100,000 through which vegetation will be planted along the banks of Horse Creek to decrease erosion and sedimentation, the EPA said.

3/10/2010 Safety

Crossing collisions, injuries and fatalities fall to record lows in '09

Newly released preliminary data from the [Federal Railroad Administration \(FRA\)](#) shows the number of highway-rail grade crossing injuries and fatalities dropped to record lows in 2009, according to Operation Lifesaver Inc. (OLI). Crossing-related injuries dropped 28.3 percent to 683 and crossing fatalities declined 14.2 percent to 289 compared with 2008 figures.

Although decreases in vehicular and freight-rail traffic contributed to the year-over-year declines, the data shows law enforcement efforts, highway-rail engineering and signaling improvements, crossing closures, and OLI's partnerships with federal, state and local agencies to raise safety awareness are working, said OLI President Helen Sramek in a prepared statement.

Meanwhile, the number of crossing collisions fell below 2,000 for the first time, tumbling 21.9 percent from 2008's level to 1,880. In addition, trespassing injuries dropped from 429 in 2008 to 338 in 2009, and trespassing fatalities decreased from 458 to 434.

"Few people realize that ... a person or a vehicle is hit by a train about every three hours," said Sramek. "Although the FRA numbers indicate a 5.2 percent drop in trespassing fatalities in 2009, it's important to remember that trespassers still account for the largest number of rail-related fatalities in the United States."

HARRY HAMBURG/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sen. Bob Corker, R-Tenn., removed his hold on an FAA reauthorization bill Wednesday after his office said the labor language objected to by FedEx "will not be included" in the Senate legislation.

WASHINGTON -- Sen. Bob Corker backed down Wednesday from a hold he had placed on an aviation bill in an effort to protect FedEx.

Laura Herzog, Corker's press secretary, said the Tennessee Republican lifted the hold on the FAA Reauthorization Act "since it appears the controversial FedEx provision will not be included in the final Senate legislation." She later said that meant the provision -- which would make it easier for certain FedEx Express employees to form unions -- won't be added to the Senate bill by amendment.

FedEx spokesman Maury Lane said Wednesday night that "we are encouraged by this development and look forward to the Tennessee senators' success with this gravely serious issue."

Corker's Tennessee colleague, Sen. Lamar Alexander, was also in the thick of negotiations that would permit the FAA bill to move forward.

"I've met with both the Republican and Democratic Senate leaders, and we're going to work to pass the Federal Aviation Administration reauthorization bill," Alexander said late Wednesday.

"At the same time, I'm going to do everything in my power to make certain that the final legislation doesn't include a provision that changes labor laws simply to penalize FedEx."

But a spokesman for U.S. Rep. James Oberstar, D-Minn., the House Transportation Committee chairman and the champion of the language to which FedEx objects, said he did not know of any deal that would remove it from future consideration.

"Mr. Oberstar is not going to give up on this easily," said his spokesman, Jim Berard. "We'll just have to see when it goes to conference."

In a day full of drama, Corker's staff met with tearful families of victims of a plane crash near Buffalo, N.Y., last year who came to town to urge passage of a bill that would raise the safety standards for regional airlines such as Memphis-based Pinnacle.

Corker lifted his hold as the meeting with victims' families was breaking up, but it remained unclear if or how much their high-profile and emotionally wrenching opposition led to his decision.

Before the families' meeting with Corker's chief of staff Todd Womack, Robin Tolsma of Buffalo, whose husband died on Flight 3407, expressed the group's frustration.

"My husband always had this saying: 'Do the right thing even when no one is looking,'" she said. "It's time for the senator to do the right thing because now everyone is looking."

Jennifer West, whose husband, Ernie, died in the crash, said a Corker staffer told her that FedEx would be "devastated" if the labor provision of a House bill that FedEx is trying to kill made it into law.

"That really infuriated me because I thought 'devastated?' Talk to me about devastation. Everyone in this room is devastated. My 3-year-old daughter is devastated because she doesn't have a daddy anymore," West said.

Kevin Kuwik, an Ohio State basketball coach whose career started at Christian Brothers University in Memphis and whose girlfriend was killed in the crash, said delaying public safety over one company's concerns was "ludicrous."

"Essentially, what this says is that Tennessee is more important than the other 49 states," he said. "It's why people are frustrated with Washington."

Some of the Flight 3407 family members said they were told that Sen. Charles Schumer, D-N.Y., had arranged for the 60 votes needed to overcome Corker's hold.

Barring coal, February carloads up 7.2%



March 11, 2010

The Association of American Railroads said Wednesday that carload traffic for 14 of the 19 major commodity groups was higher last month than in February 2009. Excluding coal carloads, which were down 9.9%, U.S. carloads in February 2010 were up 7.2% over February 2009.

Intermodal traffic was up 10.1% in February compared with the same month last year, though down 10.6% from the same month in 2008.

"Rail traffic trends over the past few months, especially when you take out coal, are consistent with a slowly recovering economy," said John Gray, AAR's senior vice president of Policy and Economics. "Other economic indicators taken as a whole seem to be saying the same thing. Is a sustained recovery a sure thing? No, not yet, but prospects are certainly much brighter now than they were four or five months ago."

Gray said the last week of February was the highest-volume week for U.S. rail carloads since December 2008, at least partly due to "catchup" traffic following record snowstorms earlier in the month.

On a seasonally adjusted basis, rail carloads in February fell 0.1% compared with January 2010, while seasonally adjusted U.S. intermodal traffic was down 3.6% in February compared to the prior month.

"Adjusting for seasonal issues that cause peaks or valleys in traffic—such as end-of-year holidays and the fall grain harvest—allows us to see more clearly the strength or weakness of the underlying demand for rail traffic," Gray noted. "Over the past six months, the upward trend in seasonally adjusted rail traffic indicates an increase in underlying demand."

CSX sees double-digit earnings growth this year



March 11, 2010

Oscar Munoz, CSX Corp. chief financial officer, told a J.P. Morgan conference in New York Tuesday that the railroad is moving toward "double-digit" earnings growth this year, a forecast based on a combination of traffic growth and price increases of at least 4% to 5%.

Munoz said traffic was up 3% in this year's first nine weeks. Intermodal, which accounts for 34% of CSX business, was up 12%, and general merchandise, which accounts for 37% of the total, was up 7%. While coal, which brings in 24%, was down 17% year-to-date, Munoz said he expected coal to end up well in the plus column by year's end, driven partly by China's rising metallurgical coal needs.

Deborah H. Butler, Norfolk Southern's executive vice president of planning and chief information officer, told the conference that freight volume on NS was up 6% year-to-date. General merchandise is up 14% and intermodal volume is up 8%, though coal volume remains down 8%. Her presentation dealt mainly with capacity growth plans involving several high-volume corridors NS is developing in partnerships with federal and state governments; altogether, she said, NS will devote more than one-fourth of a \$1.4 billion capital spending program to growth projects.

Munoz examined the trends behind the growth now forecast and described how the railroad will respond.

Gross Domestic Product is expected to grow 3.0% this year, with industrial production rising 4.3%. Last year, GDP fell 3.4% and industrial production was down 9.7%.

A more efficient railroad is in place to move the returning traffic, said Munoz, which means that "as volume builds, resources will return less than 1-for-1."

These are the idle resources now available to CSX:

- * Train & Engine employees furloughed now add up to 1,529, 14% of the total.
- * Locomotives in storage total 407, 10% of the fleet.
- * Freight cars stored—15,864—represent 20% of the total.

CQ TODAY ONLINE NEWS
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Final Health Bill Timeline Emerges

By Alex Wayne, CQ Staff

House leaders are positioning for a final vote on health care overhaul legislation as soon as next week, though it is unclear that they will be able to corral 216 members needed to pass the measure.

Congressional Budget Office scores of the final bill were expected Friday, and two key committees have scheduled votes on the bill for next week.

Meanwhile, it appeared doubtful that anti-abortion members of the House Democratic caucus had the numbers to block legislation on the floor. Their leader, Rep. [Bart Stupak](#) of Michigan, has said that about a dozen members are against the Senate-passed bill ([HR 3590](#)) because they believe its restrictions on abortion coverage are insufficient. However, some of those members are wavering in their opposition.

According to plans under discussion Thursday, the Budget Committee would act first, on March 15. It is expected to approve a bill — to be moved under expedited budget reconciliation procedures — that would amend the Senate’s legislation, according to Republican and Democratic aides.

The Rules Committee would then follow on March 17, said its chairwoman, Louise M. Slaughter, D-N.Y., with a rule for debate on both the reconciliation bill and the Senate health care bill. The full House could then take up the measures together, as soon as the next day, Democratic leaders say.

Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., would not commit to a timetable. “We will take up the bill when we’re ready to take up the bill,” she told reporters Thursday. “But it is not something that we want to drag out. Because the decisions are made; the choice has to be made.”

But one lawmaker, who asked not to be identified, quoted Pelosi as saying to her caucus: “I’m hearing that you’d like to move sooner rather than later. Is that the will of the body?”

“There was a broad shout of ‘Yes!’” the lawmaker said. “I think everybody understands. We need to move on, we’ve got other things we’ve got to do, this is our last, best chance, let’s get it in front of the bodies and have appropriate votes and if it passes, it passes, and if it doesn’t, it doesn’t.”

Getting the health care legislation through the House is the first step in the Democrats’ endgame for the overhaul. Leaders are contemplating a process in which the House would draft a rule for the debate that would deem the Senate bill passed upon adoption of the rule, to avoid a vote directly on the Senate bill that many House Democrats dislike. The House would then pass a “corrections” bill containing policy changes favored by House Democrats, and use budget reconciliation rules, which require a simple majority for passage.

Procedure and Politics

But House Democrats are nervous about the political fallout from such a strategy. And their fears intensified Thursday, after the Senate Parliamentarian’s office weighed in on the process. He reportedly ruled that a budget reconciliation bill can only change existing law.

Republican aides, reporting the decision, interpreted it to mean the House would have to clear the Senate bill and President Obama would have to sign it before the reconciliation bill could be passed. House leaders had been hoping that the two bills could be passed almost simultaneously.

The parliamentarian, however, later reportedly clarified his position to Senate aides, saying that the reconciliation bill could be written in a way that would not require Obama to sign the Senate bill into law before the reconciliation bill is voted on.

Democrats had already been forging ahead in any case and were either not commenting or skeptical of the Republican account of the ruling.

A bigger procedural problem for Democrats could come in the Senate, where Republicans are expected to offer numerous amendments and points of order, which are allowed under the reconciliation process.

“I think you can presume there will be amendments that get into our views about how you can have better health policy, and get into a lot of other issues that some of our members want to have votes on,” Judd Gregg, R-N.H., said Thursday.

Fighting Endless Amendments

Senate Democratic leaders are now trying to figure out how they would prevent Republicans from tying the chamber up in knots with such amendments. With no direct precedents to rely on, they might have to plow new ground to establish whether and when proposed Republican amendments considered under reconciliation rules should be ruled out of order as “dilatory.”

It would make no sense, Democrats believe, to allow dilatory amendments to block passage of legislation that is designed to be immune to filibusters.

Majority Whip [Richard J. Durbin](#), D-Ill., predicted Thursday that Democrats would eventually cut off Republican amendments to a reconciliation measure, via a ruling from the chair.

“Reconciliation allows for unlimited amendments, but no one has ever abused that process,” he said. “There comes a point where people offer amendments, they are voted on, and then we move on. If that’s the case on [health](#) care [reform](#), there won’t be an issue. We hope it doesn’t reach a point where it goes beyond that into something that is extreme or dilatory or not constructive.”

Durbin acknowledged that there is no procedural precedent to cut off such attempts to thwart the bill. “If it reaches that extreme situation, we’ll have to face it. I hope we don’t,” he said.

Gregg said he believed that Democrats cannot limit GOP amendments on reconciliation, and he characterized Durbin’s stance as arrogant.

“That’s an incredibly autocratic statement for someone to make who’s in the Senate,” he said. “If he wants to approach the Senate that way, he should have stayed in the House.”

3/12/2010 Traffic

AAR weekly report: The rail freight volume recovery continues

U.S. rail freight volume continues to show signs that it's getting back on track. During the week ending March 6, they originated 285,160 carloads, up 3.7 percent, and 212,296 intermodal loads, up 17.9 percent compared with totals from the same 2009 week, according to the [Association of American Railroads \(AAR\)](#). Total volume rose 5.1 percent to an estimated 31.1 billion ton-miles.

Meanwhile, Canadian railroads reported volume of 74,604 cars, up 23 percent from the same week last year, and 44,971 trailers or containers, up 20.7 percent. Mexican railroads reported originated volume of 13,375 cars, up 16.3 percent from the same week last year, and 7,153 trailers or containers, up 69.6 percent.

For 2010's first nine weeks, combined North American rail volume on 13 reporting U.S., Canadian and Mexican railroads totaled 3,191,568 carloads, up 2.7 percent from the total recorded during 2009's first nine weeks, and 2,266,244 trailers and containers, up 7.8 percent.