

INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF TEAMSTERS

AFL-CIO



OFFICE OF
JAMES P. HOFFA
GENERAL PRESIDENT

October 6, 2004

Dear BMW Members:

On behalf of the 1.4 million members of the Teamsters Union, I want to tell you that WE want you to join us and become a driving force behind the most exciting development in the recent history of rail labor—the Teamsters Rail Conference.

You have a chance to be part of this historic moment by approving the merger of the BMW and the Teamsters. **If you haven't mailed in your ballot for the merger yet, I encourage you to do so today.** If you have already mailed your ballot, thank you. The deadline for receiving the ballot is October 27, 2004, approximately three weeks from now.

This merger is going to end rail corporations' "business as usual" approach to contract negotiations. With both the BMW and the BLET together as autonomous divisions of the Rail Conference and members of the Teamsters, railroad workers will have greater power at the bargaining table.

Negotiating with a unified Teamsters Rail Conference, the rail corporations will no longer be able to simply divide one rail union against the other. A united Rail Conference will level the playing field between workers and employers in contract negotiations.

As you consider this vote, ask yourself this central question: **Are you stronger standing alone or are you stronger standing united with other rail unions in the Teamsters Rail Conference?**

Too many unions remain small and fragmented within their industries, while corporations have been merging, and merging, and merging – creating nationwide behemoths with unmatched resources. They are using their size and power to divide, demoralize and decimate us.

The Teamsters believe we need to fight fire with fire. We must join together in solidarity to protect the interests of all rail union members. Though just started in January 2004, the Teamsters Rail Conference is already at 3 percent of total Teamster membership. When all is said and done, merging the BMW, the BLET and the IBT strengthens each entity. And, if other rail unions join with the BMW and the BLE in merging with the Teamsters, the Teamsters Rail Conference stands to be one of the largest divisions at the Teamsters.

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The Teamsters' history of negotiating strong contracts is unparalleled. Teamster contracts have among the highest wages, best benefits, safest workplace and other standards.

The Teamsters are America's strongest union. The Teamsters Union is this nation's largest private sector union and it is the nation's largest transportation union. The Teamsters have 1.4 Million members in US, Canada, Puerto Rico in 500 Locals and 40 Joint Councils. The Teamsters have extraordinary financial resources - \$140 million a year at the International level and \$550 million a year at the Local union level. The Rail Conference is a key component of the Teamsters' vision of a comprehensive transportation union – rails and roads, ports and planes.

Contrary to popular belief, the Teamsters are not mostly a truckers' union. In fact, truck drivers represent less than 10 percent of Teamsters members. **The Teamsters represent workers from a wide cut of America's transportation workforce, including workers in rail, ports, air cargo, passenger air, trucking and package delivery.**

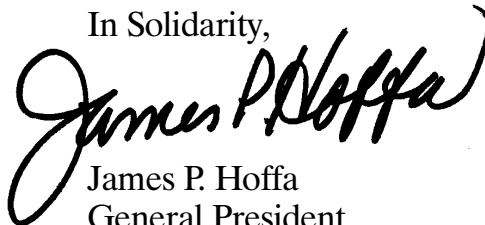
The Teamsters Union dedicates **\$15 million annually to organizing** and conducts **more NLRB and NMB elections** every year than any other union in the U.S. Over the past ten years, the Teamsters membership has remained stable, while other union's membership has declined.

The Teamster Union is this nation's most powerful political union, bar none. We have Teamster members living in every congressional district in the United States who are politically active. **Member power merged with financial power translates into political power.**

Over the past decade, we have witnessed rail corporations merging and growing stronger, while the power of the rail unions has remained the same. Now we need to fight fire with fire. **We must join together in solidarity to protect the interests of all transportation union members.**

The time is now. The choice is yours. **Join us and become part of the Teamsters Rail Conference. Please mail in your ballot for the merger today, if you haven't done so already.**

In Solidarity,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James P. Hoffa". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "J".

James P. Hoffa
General President

JPH/dc