



Railroad Workers United

Solidarity • Unity • Democracy

The Rank & File in Action!

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RWU Resolution in Support of Safe Train Length & Braking

Whereas rail carriers have consistently over the years increased the size of trains while disregarding the limitations of technology and infrastructure largely unimproved for decades; and

Whereas longer, heavier trains create much higher buff and draft forces during, what would otherwise be a minor derailment event, which can then lead to a major catastrophic event; and

Whereas many potential problems cannot be identified and corrected by the onboard crew due of the length of these trains; and

Whereas these trains carry cargo that carries the potential to cause mass casualty events due to their volatility and toxicity; and

Whereas the US rail industry has spent far more on share buyback programs every year than on the infrastructure expected to handle these long, dangerous trains; and

Whereas the railroads have drastically cut car repair staff, creating shorter and less thorough inspections of the rail cars expected to be handled in these long, dangerous trains; and

Whereas the railroad industry has actively worked to eliminate regulation which would have required a more modern braking system to reduce in-train-forces in a derailment, as well as in daily operations; and

Whereas the reliability and effectiveness of the conventional braking system trains use is reduced greatly when it is subjected to excessive train lengths, especially in cold weather; and

Whereas the railroads have shown zero regard for public safety or inconvenience at crossings, while conducting unregulated experiments on our communities by running trains of essentially unlimited length; and

Whereas railroads effectively surrendered any regulatory autonomy when they merged to become regulated monopolies subject to common carrier obligations;

Therefore be it Resolved, that RWU demands that railroad safety regulators act immediately to set temporary maximum safe train lengths, that account for dangerous slack events occurring during a derailment, as well as to significantly reduce such incidents; and

Be it Further Resolved that RWU demands that a set of permanent train length regulations be implemented within a reasonable time which establishes federal safe train lengths for conventional, DPU, Hazmat, ECP and Non-ECP brake equipped trains; and

Be it Finally Resolved that RWU demands that regulators establish a permanent regulation that requires trains defined as "Key Trains" under hazardous material regulations to be equipped with operative ECP braking systems.

Adopted by the RWU Steering Committee 3/1/2023