



BROTHERHOOD OF
LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS AND
TRAINMEN
NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE OFFICE
IBT RAIL CONFERENCE

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'RAIL WORKERS NEED TO SEE A RETURN ON THEIR INVESTMENT'



Tom Pontolillo, BLET Director of Regulatory Affairs, gave a presentation from labor's perspective at a December 12th forum, hosted by Representative John Mica (R-FL), regarding railroad infrastructure financing.

Representative Mica, Ranking Member of the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee, convened the forum to examine the future capacity needs of our nation's freight rail system, projected capital investment over the next thirty years, and the financial incentives needed to attract sufficient private capital investment.

Pontolillo noted that, since
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BLET PAC HONOR ROLL

Since November, the following Divisions have signed up 3 or more new members of the BLET PAC:

Division 601

Division 155

Division 186

Division 526

Thank you to all those who have signed up.

DIVISION 57 LEADS THE WAY IN NEW PAC DONATIONS

In January, BLET Vice President and National Legislative Representative John Tolman set the ambitious goal of doubling the BLET PAC. Many states and BLET Divisions heeded this call and set about to increase PAC contributors. BLET Division 57, in Boston, led the charge. Division 57 began a campaign this year to recruit new members to the BLET PAC. Although usually coordinated by the Legislative

Representative, Paul Chaput, President of Division 57, succeeded in adding 70 new members, which is the most new members added by any Division.

Brother Chaput added to the percentage of PAC members in his Division through an aggressive plan of recruiting. He asked the National Legislative Office to provide him with a list of PAC contributors in the Division and then

also asked those who could not contribute to give their time by volunteering.

"I challenged my membership because



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MESSAGE FROM VICE PRESIDENT TOLMAN

As 2007 comes to a close, I would like to take the opportunity to reflect on the past year and to look forward to 2008.

This year was a challenging one on the legislative side. We spent countless hours working to get a rail safety bill passed. As I said in the last issue, we began working on this as soon as the new Congress took office and have continued working on it all year.

During this time, we have stressed to lawmakers the need to enact the first rail safety bill in 12 years. And, I would like to think they have heard our message. The House passed H.R. 2095, and while S. 1889 is still pending, I have high hopes that it will be passed in the next session.

The BLET National Legislative Office has many goals for 2008. First and foremost among these is the introduction and passage of crew critical incident coun-

seling legislation, along with crew van regulations, in every state. We know that there will be hard times in front of us because of the anti-labor nature of many state legislatures, but we are hopeful that reason will prevail.

The 2008 Presidential and Congressional elections are also upon us. I know that we say it every two years, but these elections are vitally important for all work-

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*Vice President and National Legislative Representative
John Tolman*

Division 57 Continued from Page 1

there is a lot at stake and they could make a substantial impact," Chaput said.

"Brother Chaput should be commended for taking it upon himself to increase donations to the BLET PAC," Vice President Tolman said. "His face to face approach could be replicated in other Divisions. It is obvious that he and the members of Division 57, in addition to the other Divisions that have significantly increased donations, understand the value of the PAC.

"In the past, we have seen what the PAC can do for our organization. It is definitely not a quid pro quo

system, but it is a way of gently opening people's eyes to who we are and what we believe in."

Division 57 has 170 members whom are employed by the Massachusetts Bay Commuter Railroad. Through their support of the BLET PAC, Division 57's members will be able to represent their issues and initiate change through elected officials, as Brother Chaput explained to his members.

As Brother Chaput noted, even retirees can contribute to the BLET PAC.

"Just because you are retired doesn't mean that your shouldn't contribute in order to impact legisla-

tion on Railroad Retirement and support others in it for the long haul," Chaput added.

Utilizing aggressive grassroots efforts and an internet website, Chaput has created a powerful voice for Division 57's legislative efforts.

"The BLET PAC is integral to the lawmaking process protecting locomotive engineers on issues such as harassment, abuse, and rail safety," said Brother Chaput. "The BLET-PAC will continue to be one of the key ways to protect our jobs and advance pro-rail labor thanks to supporters such as Division 57."

NLO TO HOLD LR CLASS

The National Legislative Office, in conjunction with the National Association of State Legislative Board Chairmen, will be holding a training class for Division Legislative Representatives on March 10-14, in Washington, D.C. Legislative Representatives will learn the following skills:

- Computer Skills - Principles of letter writing and Database management
- Regulatory Affairs - What needs to be reported and documented
- Political Affairs - How a bill becomes a law, how to lobby, write to politicians and about elections
- Robert's Rules & Conducting Meetings - Rules of Order
- Your State's Bylaws

For more information or to register for the class, please contact the NLO at 202-624-8776.

KURTZ INTRODUCES EDWARDS



While the BLET has not endorsed a Presidential candidate, Iowa State Legislative Board Chairman Jeff Kurtz gave his personal endorsement for the Iowa Caucuses to John

Edwards. Brother Kurtz, introducing former Senator Edwards, is pictured at right in Fort Madison, Iowa on December 4.

During a forum on Friday, December 14, Brother Kurtz also had the opportunity to pose a question to Senator Joe Biden (D-DE), according to an article published in the *Fort Madison (Iowa) Daily Democrat*. The following is an excerpt of that conversation.

Kurtz' concern was the topic of climate change, but he already had a solu-

tion in mind. He said high-speed rail would make a definite impact and wondered if Biden would promote that as an alternative.

"I commute 250 miles a day on high-speed rail," Biden said. "I'm Mr. Amtrak."

Biden proposes an interstate high-speed rail service similar to the interstate highway system.

"One mile of one lane of I-80 costs \$22 million," Biden said. "One mile of

I-95 (on the East Coast) holds more traffic and costs \$41 million." By contrast, "One mile of high-speed rail costs \$1 million.

"You can fit more people on a rail car and you'll be taking 50 automobiles off the road. Rail uses 1/50th of the cost (of a car) in terms of energy consumption."

Teamsters News

HOFFA DENOUNCES SIGNING OF PERU FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

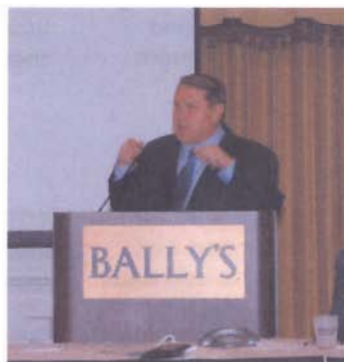
Teamsters General President Jim Hoffa says President Bush should have vetoed the Peru Free Trade Agreement instead of a bill to provide health care for children, according to a Teamsters press release.

Bush was scheduled to sign the bill authorizing the deal with Peru on December 14th. He has twice vetoed the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), a bipartisan bill to bring health insurance to children in low-income working families.

"Working men and women understand the damage done to them by these job-killing 'free-trade agreements'," Hoffa said. "These deals are less about reducing trade barriers than they are about exploiting cheap labor and protecting investments of multinational corporations."

"If the Bush administration brings forward a free trade agreement with Colombia, I hope Congress will agree with me and say 'HELL, NO'," Hoffa said. "It's time to say yes to cracking down on China's currency manipulation, yes to food and product safety standards for imports, yes to keeping jobs in America instead of shipping them out of the country."

"Another so-called 'free-trade



agreement' is just what we don't need," Hoffa said.

HOFFA SAYS COUNTERFEITING, PIRACY COST JOBS

Stealing intellectual property also steals jobs, Teamsters General President Jim Hoffa also told a congressional panel, according to a Teamsters press release.

In testimony before the Congressional Subcommittee on Courts, The Internet, and Intellectual Property, Hoffa threw his support behind H.R. 4279, a bipartisan bill that would raise fines for copyright infringement and give the government more power to enforce already existing intellectual property laws.

Hoffa expressed his concern with the ever-growing negative impact counterfeit products from overseas and pirated media has on corporate health which in turn leads

to job loss and the deterioration of the American economy.

"Some people might think it's no big deal to buy a knock-off handbag or fake DVD, but it is," Hoffa said. "These crimes kill jobs – good jobs that my union has fought to protect for more than a hundred years."

Hoffa pointed to statistics that estimate that approximately 370,000 jobs in the American entertainment industry are lost every year as a result of the lost revenue from pirated and counterfeited media. Hoffa testified that China is the greatest source of knockoff and pirated goods in the world and our government has done little to stop the flood of illegal, substandard products into our country.

"China's aggressive export agenda is more than our country can handle," Hoffa said. "The parts of the bill that create new Intellectual Property Enforcement positions within the executive branch will help us get control of the problem."

However, Hoffa also stressed the need to raise awareness with consumers who may not realize the impact their actions have on the economy when they illegally copy a song or movie.

"Education will be important to our success," said Hoffa. "An entire generation of iPod and internet users are growing up believing piracy isn't a crime. The Teamsters Union supports our brothers and sisters in the Writers

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GROUP PROPOSES DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL HIGH SPEED RAIL SYSTEM

The National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission's Passenger Rail Working Group issued a report on December 6th entitled "Vision for the Future: U.S. Intercity Passenger Rail Network Through 2050." The National Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission was created by the 109th Congress to provide a national surface transportation vision, including funding and policy recommendations. The commission is chaired by U.S. Transportation Secretary Mary Peters, and its final report is expected in January.

The Passenger Rail Working Group is made up of intercity passenger rail experts and transportation professionals.

The Passenger Rail Working group has provided the Commission with

information and recommendations regarding the development of an intercity rail system, and designed a rail network which will eventually link the 48 contiguous states. The system will be similar to the Interstate Highway System, and the working group will work to fund a national passenger rail which connects major population centers, with service to rural areas along the way.

According to the Commission, the working group considered the historical role of intercity passenger rail in the U.S., looked at today's passenger rail network, examined the costs and benefits of an expanded system, and developed a cost estimate for its vision. The group also made federal funding recommendations and suggested a structure for program development.

The plan maintains the entire existing national passenger rail system and builds on it by adding more frequent

service, including the development of the federally designated high speed corridors. Many of these investments will also benefit the freight rail network.

The group developed cost estimates for national intercity passenger rail, and placed these costs into three segments: immediate (2007-2015), midterm (2016-2030) and long-term (2031-2050). The funding needs associated with the plan are estimated to be \$357.2 billion, or \$8.1 billion annually through 2050. The plan also suggests that 80 percent of this funding come from the federal government and 20 percent come from the states.

"I believe this plan is something that the BLET can get behind and help in its development," BLET Vice President and National Legislative Representative John Tolman said. "There is a great need for high speed rail and intercity passenger rail in this country and this lays out the way we meet these needs."

Railroad News

STB TO PERFORM EXTENSIVE REVIEW OF DM&E SALE

The Surface Transportation Board is reviewing the sale of the Dakota, Minnesota & Eastern Railway to Canadian Pacific. The deal was announced in September and Canadian Pacific will pay \$1.48 billion cash for the DM&E and its subsidiaries.

The STB has determined that the sale is a "significant" transaction that merits further review.

The agency earlier approved DM&E's plan to reconstruct 600 miles of tracks and extend its line 280 miles to Wyoming coal fields. However, financing for the project fell through when the railroad's re-

quest for a \$2.3 billion loan from the Federal Railroad Administration was denied. The DM&E wanted to add track to the Powder River Basin coal fields in Wyoming and upgrade its existing line in South Dakota and Minnesota. The FRA denied the loan, saying it posed an unacceptably high risk to taxpayers.

SUPREME COURT RULES FOR RAILROADS IN TAX CASE

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled on December 4th that railroads may challenge state methods for determining the value of their property, a decision that could lower some railroad tax bills.

In a unanimous decision, the court sided with CSX Transportation Inc. in a case from Georgia in which the railroad argued that the state improperly instituted a new way of calculating its prop-

erty tax that resulted in a nearly 50 percent increase in its tax bill from one year to the next.

The court reversed a ruling from the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals that prohibited the railroad, a subsidiary of CSX Corp., from challenging the method the state used to determine the value of the railroad's property.

The case is CSX Transportation Inc. v. Georgia State Board of Equalization, 06-1287.

FRA MOVES TO NEW OFFICE

The Federal Railroad Administration offices have moved. The new address is: Federal Railroad Administration 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE Washington, DC 20590

REGULATORY CORNER

On December 17th, a new FRA regulation governing locomotive sanders became effective. Previously, sanders had to be operative at the time the daily inspection was made, and not necessarily when a train departed its initial terminal.

As a result of a 2002 petition by the Association of American Railroads to remove the sander requirement altogether, the issue was referred by the FRA to the Railroad Safety Advisory Committee's Locomotive

Safety Standards Working Group. The Working Group reviewed a series of braking studies done in Canada in developing the new regulation.

All road locomotives must now have operative sanders: (1) every time they leave an initial terminal, where the Class I brake test and inspection is performed; (2) every time they leave a facility equipped with a sand delivery system; and (3) at the conclusion of every periodic inspection. Moreover, a road locomotive whose sander has been in-

operative for 14 calendar days cannot be used in the lead.

With respect to yard locomotives, the current rule continues to apply if the locomotive is at a location that is equipped with a sand delivery system. Yard locomotives at other locations may be used up to 7 calendar days after a sander failure, unless it becomes due for a periodic inspection during that period.

Investment continued from Page 1

deregulation, railroad workers have been a key element in making the railroad industry successful and that railroad workers would now like to receive a return on their investment.

"We have a definite problem with supporting tax credits without labor pro-

tections," Pontolillo said.

Brother Pontolillo was joined by experts from the federal government, rail industry and labor, and the financial community to discuss financing rail infrastructure, including:

- Mark Yachmetz, Associate Administrator, Fed-

eral Railroad Administration

- Chip Nottingham, Chairman, Surface transportation Board
- Ed Hamberger, President, American Association of Railroads
- Rich Timmons, President, American Short Line

& Regional Railroad Association

- Matt Rose, CEO, BNSF Railroad
- Tony Hatch, ABH Consultants
- Ed Wolfe, Bear Stearns
- Mort Downey, Coalition on America's Gateways

Teamsters News Continued from Page 3

Guild as they fight for their fair share of profit from new media. If piracy goes unchecked, it will directly affect the writers who provide the content that makes the motion picture and television industry run."

BUSH ADMINISTRATION SIDES WITH TRUCKING INDUSTRY, IGNORES DRIVERS

The Bush administration's reinstated hours-of-service rule meets the economic needs of the trucking industry but not the health and safety needs of truck drivers, a Teamster official told the Senate surface transporta-

tion subcommittee on December 19.

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) issued an interim final rule last week. The rule, which was twice thrown out by the court, allows truck drivers to work as many as 84 hours a week.

"The FMCSA is more concerned about the economic viability of the trucking industry than about the safety and health of the drivers in this rulemaking," said LaMont Byrd, Teamsters Director of Safety and Health.

The rule is almost identical to

the industry's 2003 proposal, Byrd said.

Byrd said the FMCSA cherry-picked from studies supporting its position that an 11-hour driving limit did not result in more fatal crashes than the previous limit of 10 hours.

The Teamsters reviewed the information provided by FMCSA and found that it does not support the agency's claim.

Byrd said FMCSA acknowledged in the past that the risk of a crash doubles from the 8th hour to the 9th hour of driving, and doubles again

from the 10th to the 11th hour.

"The Bush administration doesn't care if unsafe Mexican trucks or exhausted truck drivers endanger everyone traveling on our highways," said Teamsters General President Jim Hoffa.

"The Bush administration could have objectively reviewed the scientific literature," Hoffa said. "It could have conducted studies to answer any open questions. It could have talked to truck drivers and safety advocates and other highway users. But it did none of those things.

"All the Bush administration did was ask the trucking industry for marching orders," Hoffa said.

Visit the NLO on the web at www.bletdc.org

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ENGINEERS AND TRAINMEN
NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE OFFICE
IBT RAIL CONFERENCE**

25 Louisiana Avenue
7th Floor
Washington, DC 20001

Phone: 202-624-8776
Fax: 202-624-3086

E-mail: bletadministrator@teamster.org

John Tolman

Vice President & National Legislative
Representative

Thomas Pontolillo

Director of Regulatory Affairs

Kathleen Policy

Legislative, Political & Regulatory
Coordinator



**SINCE 1863
A TRADITION OF
FORWARD THINKING**

Message from VP & NLR Tolman FROM PAGE 2

ers. We have a chance to finally elect a President who is not in the pocket of big businesses – especially the railroads. For the past seven years, we have not had the chance to get our voices heard by Executive Branch because the railroads' voices were so much louder.

In 2006, we elected a Democratic majority in Congress but this majority was a slim one and we need to add to it. If we can add to the Democratic majority in both chambers, this may enable things such as S. 1889 to be moved a little more quickly through the process, and may enable us to pass bills with even more protections for workers.

I would like to thank everyone for their hard work and dedication this year. I would like to thank the State Legislative Board Chairmen who came to lobby in Washington, and I would especially like to thank the Advisory Board members and General Chairmen who took time out of their busy schedules to come, including: Edward Rodzwick, Marcus Ruef, Steve Speagle, Mark Kenny, Dennis Pierce and Bob Linsey.

2008 will be an eventful year for the BLET and the National Legislative Office in particular. I look forward to working with each and every one of you and wish you and your family all the best in the New Year .

Washington Briefs

SENATE SUPPORTER OF AMTRAK TO RESIGN

Senator Trent Lott (R-MS) has announced that he will resign from the U.S. Senate before the end of the year. Senator Lott, a member of the Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation, has been a vocal supporter of Amtrak for many years. However, he is also a proponent of privatizing and contracting out portions of the passenger rail system.

Lott was first elected in 1972 to the House and he then won a Senate seat in 1988.

AMTRAK BOARD CHANGES ANNOUNCED

Donna McLean was recently elected to the position of Amtrak Board Chairman, succeeding David Laney.

McLean was appointed by President Bush and approved by the Senate in

July 2006. Prior to her election, she served as the board's vice chairman.

The Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation confirmed the appointment of Thomas Carper, Nancy Naples and Denver Stutler Jr. to the Amtrak Reform Board on December 18.

Carper is the former mayor of Macomb, Illinois. Carper is replacing Sylvia de Leon, whose term expired. Naples of New York is replacing Enrique J. Sosa, who resigned. Stutler, of Florida is replacing David Laney, whose term is expiring.

PRESIDENT BUSH NAMES PEB FOR AMTRAK DISPUTE

President Bush has appointed a Presidential Emergency Board to intervene in the dispute between Amtrak and nine unions.

The nine unions are: Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Divi-

sion of the Teamsters Rail Conference; International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers; International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers; Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen; Joint Council of Carmen, comprised of the Transportation Communications International Union/Brotherhood Railway Carmen Division and the Transport Workers Union of America; American Train Dispatchers Association; National Conference of Firemen & Oilers/Service Employees International Union; and Transportation Communications International Union – American Railway and Airline Supervisors Association.

The President appointed the following individuals to be Members of the Presidential Emergency Board #242 to investigate the dispute between Amtrak and eight unions: Ira F. Jaffe; Joshua M. Javits; Annette M. Sandberg.; Peter W. Tredick and Helen Mercer Witt. A hearing was held on December 11th-13th.