



Railroad Workers United

Solidarity • Unity • Democracy

The Rank & File in Action!

Railroadworkersunited.org • (202) 798-3327 • info@railroadworkersunited.org

RWU Resolution on Coronavirus and the Railroad

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Ross Grooters, BLET #778
UP, Des Moines, IA

Jason Doering, SMART #1117
UP, Las Vegas, NV

Jim Thomason
Stillwater Central, Owasso, OK

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AMTK, Reno, NV

Recording Secretary

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BNSF, Lincoln, NE

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Jason Doering, SMART #1117
UP, Las Vegas, NV

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UP, Des Moines, IA

Ron Kaminkow, BLET #51
AMTK, Reno, NV

Ryan McEldowney, SMART # 867
UP, Des Moines, IA

Mark Moylan, BRC #6013
CN, Proctor, MN

Joe Mulligan, BLET #57
KEOLIS, Kingston, MA

Hugh Sawyer, BLET #316
NS, Atlanta, GA

Jim Thomason
Stillwater Central, Owasso, OK

James Wallace, UTU #305
BNSF, Lincoln, NE

Andrew Weir, TCRC-LE #240
CN, Sarnia, ON

Whereas, the peoples of the world are threatened by the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic; and

Whereas, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, the Canadian Public Health Agency, the World Health Organization, and government officials around the world all agree that the best way to slow and stop the spread of this and other diseases is social distancing and quarantine; and

Whereas, many railroad workers labor in close proximity to one another, and handle shared tools and equipment; and

Whereas, many railroad workers are subject to chronic fatigue, laboring long hours often outdoors in all kinds of weather, lacking set work schedules, often expected to be on-call and ready to go to work at any and all hours of the day and night, 365 days a year; and

Whereas, thousands of railroad workers move millions of Americans across a vast network of intercity and commuter trains, facing a high risk of exposure to illness and disease on a daily basis; and

Whereas, in recent years, the major rail carriers have unilaterally imposed draconian attendance policies that restrict workers from taking needed time off of work; and

Whereas many railroad workers – including most engineers and conductors on the major railroad systems in the U.S. - have no paid sick leave; and

Whereas, even many large anti-union employers with a history of poor employee wages and benefits numerous large high profile major corporations in the U.S. – including Walmart, Starbucks, Target, and Kentucky Fried Chicken - have announced measures to assist in the containment of the virus, by allowing employees excused time off with pay for two weeks and often longer; and

Whereas, the Class One rail carriers have been making confusing and contradictory statements to their employees, demanding that “sick” employees stay at home upon threat of discipline, while offering no testing, no paid time off, and no relaxation of their harsh attendance policies;

Therefore, Be it Resolved, that Railroad Workers United demands that in the interest of workers health and safety, the travelling public, and the health and well-being of the nation that the rail carriers undertake immediate measures that truly combat the pandemic, including but not limited to:

- Temperature testing and screening of employees when arriving at work, with employees sent home as necessary.
- Allowing paid time off – for a two-week minimum period - for workers infected and/or workers who have immediate family members who are stricken with the virus.
- Recalling to service currently furloughed employees to provide adequate and proper staffing until the crisis over.
- Ensuring that hand washing facilities and sanitizer, together with disinfectant wipes are readily available and conveniently located throughout the workplace.
- Properly cleaning and sanitizing all workspaces, including offices, crew rooms, company and contracted vehicles, locomotive cabs and toilets, and away-from-home lodging facilities.
- Posting signage throughout the workplace on the importance of hand washing and cleanliness to stopping the spread of the disease.

And be it Further Resolved that Railroad Workers United demands that the Federal Railroad Administration enforce these common sense, easily applied, and inexpensive measures to keep American railroad workers, our families, and our communities safe during this crisis; and

Be it finally Resolved that RWU opposes any attempt by the rail carriers to use the “emergency” granted by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) in order to bypass safety considerations or to avoid the enactment of the measures outlined above.

Adopted by the RWU Steering Committee 3/19/20