



Railroad Workers United

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The Rank & File in Action!

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Press Release

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For Immediate Release

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Railroad Workers Call for Immediate Action to Prevent Future Train Wrecks

East Palestine, OH - It has been three weeks since the tragic train wreck that devastated this small town. Despite the initial lack of attention it received, politicians and bureaucrats have finally become aware of the tragedy. Railroad Workers United (RWU) urges everyone concerned not to be distracted by rhetoric, hyperbole, promises, and lies but instead to focus on the primary reasons for the derailment and take immediate action to prevent future disasters.

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) Preliminary Report released on February 23rd clearly stated that "This was 100% preventable. ... There is no accident. Every single event that we investigate is preventable." RWU believes that the Class One freight rail carriers, including Norfolk Southern, have prioritized profits over safety, cutting maintenance, equipment inspections, and personnel in all crafts while increasing the average train size to three miles or more.

According to RWU Co-Chair Gabe Christenson, "Railroad workers experience firsthand every day the dangers inherent in this style of railroading. It has impacted their safety and health, state of mind, and lives on and off the job." RWU General Secretary Jason Doering adds, "Every day we go to work, we have serious concerns about preventing accidents like the one that occurred in Ohio. As locomotive engineers, conductors, signal maintainers, car inspectors, track workers, dispatchers, machinists, and electricians, we experience the reality that our jobs are becoming increasingly dangerous due to insufficient staffing, inadequate maintenance, and a lack of oversight and inspection. We recognize that limits on train lengths and weights are necessary to prevent catastrophic derailments."

RWU demands immediate action by government regulatory agencies and Congress to rein in Class One railroads. This action must ensure sufficient staffing to do the job properly, efficiently, and safely, with all trains operating with a minimum of a two-person crew. Train length and weight must be capped at a reasonable level to mitigate the increased likelihood of breakdowns, train separations, and derailments. Adequate and proper maintenance and inspections of locomotives and rail cars, tracks and signals, wayside detectors, and other infrastructure must be implemented. Ample training and time off without the harassment of draconian attendance policies must also be standardized.

"We demand that the railroad be run safely, efficiently, and professionally, and not as some 'cash cow' for Wall Street investors and billionaires," notes Hugh Sawyer, RWU Treasurer. "Much of what is wrong with the rail industry today can be fixed easily and quickly by acting on what is outlined above. We demand action NOW."

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