VICTORY IN COLORADO!

Governor to sign BLET-backed rail safety bill today





Colorado's BLET-backed railroad safety bill, HB24-1030, was approved by the State Senate on May 8 and is on its way to the desk of Governor Jared Polis to be signed into law. He is scheduled to sign the bill later today.

Paul Pearson, BLET Colorado State Legislative Board Chairman, said the bill will establish an Office of Rail Safety at the state level. "This is a vital first step in improving our state's rail safety, especially at a time when Colorado's legislators are considering expanding passenger rail access along Colorado's Front Range and west into the mountains," Brother Pearson said.

HB24-1030 strengthens safety standards for railroads operating in Colorado by:

- Improving emergency response procedures through preparation and coordination;
- Initiating state oversight of critical wayside detector systems;
- Requiring a train crossing to be clear when an emergency vehicle, such as an ambulance or police car, approaches;
- Allowing unions to request investigations from the Office of Rail Safety; and
- Increasing penalties for safety violations, with increased emphasis on repeat or knowing violations.

"I thank our Colorado BLET members, as well as their families and friends, for all their hard work over the last five months. This bill was introduced on the first day of the legislative session and finally voted on and sent to Governor Polis on the last day of the session. None of this would have been possible without our members' texts, emails, phone calls and time spent lobbying at the Capitol over the 120-day legislative session.

"The presence of our members at the state capitol from Division 430 in Trinidad (BNSF/C&S) and Division 727 in Sterling (BNSF/MRL) was specifically noted by legislators from both towns. Our members made sure their support of rail safety and HB24-1030 was made loud and clear to their

respective legislators from both chambers. I can't stress strongly enough how vital it is to have our membership engaged and participating in the legislative process, as we couldn't have achieved this victory without their time and efforts. We still have a lot of work to do, but this is a huge first step and a nice victory to reward everyone's hard work."

BLET lobbied for the legislation as part of a multi-faceted rail safety coalition, which includes labor and environmental groups. Pearson said the victory would not have been possible without the coalition members, led by the Colorado AFL-CIO and the Colorado Blue Green Alliance.