



Railroad Workers United

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Press Release

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For Immediate Release

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Final Week of March Witnesses Train Derailments Nationwide

Starting with a runaway train in Southern California on Monday, March 27th, the week was not a good one for the Class One railroads of the United States. Five Class One carriers — BNSF, Canadian National, Canadian Pacific, Norfolk Southern and Union Pacific, plus Regional Montana Rail Link — saw major derailments in six states - Alabama, California, Minnesota, North Dakota, Pennsylvania and Montana — throughout the course of the week. According to locomotive engineer and RWU General Secretary Jason Doering, "The recent uptick in derailments across the US highlights the dire need for stricter regulations on the length and weight of trains, as well as a focus on preventing unsafe operational practices such as Precision Scheduled Railroading (PSR) which prioritizes short-term financial gains for Wall Street over the safety of communities and railroad workers.

On Monday 3/27, 55 cars of a Union Pacific ore train rolled away down the steep grade of Cima Hill in the Mojave desert. All 55 cars and 2 locomotives were destroyed in the wreck that apparently reached speeds of well over 100 miles per hour as they ran away down the mountain before wrecking on a curve. Also on Monday, 31 cars of a Canadian Pacific train derailed in North Dakota spilling liquid asphalt.

On Thursday 3/30, 15 rail cars of a Canadian National ore train derailed in Pennsylvania. This was preceded earlier that morning when 22 cars of a BNSF mixed freight derailed in Minnesota, some of the cars containing ethanol. The wreckage caught fire, leading to the evacuation of local residents.

On Friday, 3/31, a Norfolk Southern train derailed in Alabama spilling 19 cars. And Finally, on Sunday 4/2/23, the Montana Rail Link — soon to be a BNSF property — spilled 24 cars into the Clark Fork River in western Montana.

"Rail workers are not surprised to see the dramatic increase in rail incidents following the widespread cuts to the industry," stated locomotive engineer and RWU Steering Committee Member Paul Lindsey. "Each year these companies siphon billions into share buybacks, dividends, and bonuses rather than into the vital maintenance and infrastructure growth we need to grow a safe, modern, and thriving rail industry."

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