



Railroad Workers United

Unity – Solidarity – Democracy: The Rank & File in Action!

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RWU Resolution in Support of Limits to Long & Heavy Trains

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Whereas, the North American rail carriers continue to run longer and heavier trains each year, and have expressed their desire to run even longer trains in the future; and

Whereas, the last year has witnessed a number of long and heavy train wrecks, resulting in a loss of life and property, wholesale evacuations, injured train crews and environmental devastation; and

Whereas, the rail carriers have a professed interest in operating such long and heavy trains as a way to perceived savings on fuel costs, motive power and labor costs; and

Whereas, rather than face the reality of the situation, the rail carriers and law makers choose to focus on irrelevant issues like inward facing cameras; and

Whereas, such overly long and heavy trains create a dangerous and unsafe situation for a number of reasons:

- 1** – the longer and heavier the train, the more difficult it is and the more time it takes to slow or to stop such a train;
- 2** – the longer and heavier the train, the more slack action is in the train, increasing run-ins and run-outs, increasing the potential for break-in-twos, emergency brake applications and derailments;
- 3** – the longer and heavier the train, the more severe the train wreck if and when such a train does derail;
- 4** – the longer and heavier the train, the more difficult it is for the train crew to safely run, inspect, work, test, and otherwise get such a train over the road.
- 5** – such trains tend to make for longer tours-of-duty for train crews, resulting in fatigue, more time at the away-from-home terminal, and a lower quality of work and home life;
- 6** – such trains are more likely to have air brake problems, especially in cold weather;
- 7** – the longer and heavier the train, the greater likelihood of blocked road and pedestrian crossings, creating a best an inconvenience to the public and at worst an inability to provide emergency services when needed;
- 8** – these blocked crossing in effect “train” motorists and the public to “run the gates” to avoid being blocked for long periods, resulting in grade crossing accidents and fatalities.

Therefore, Be it Resolved that Railroad Workers United opposes any expansion of the current length and tonnage of existing trains; and

Be it Further Resolved that RWU supports a reduction in length and tonnage of already existing trains, especially those hauling hazardous materials, traversing steep grades and /or cold temperatures; and

Be it Finally Resolved that RWU urge the unions in the U.S., Canada and Mexico to further these ends legislatively and/or contractually.

Adopted by the RWU Steering Committee February 4th, 2014