

The Trains Keep Getting Longer

Since the 1990s, the rail carriers have been expanding the length and tonnage of trains to the point where it is not uncommon to see eight, nine and even 10,000 foot trains. And as car capacity increases, unit trains of grain, coal, crude oil and other bulk commodities regularly exceed 15,000 tons. And the carriers have experimented in recent years with trains up to 15,000 feet (three miles long!) While the rail carriers see dollar signs in terms of cost savings on train crews and other expenses, these long and heavy trains are taking their toll on railroad workers, pedestrians and motorists, the environment, trackside communities and the general public.

"Up until the 1990s, the average freight train in Canada was about 5,000 feet (1.54 kilometers) long and weighed 7,000 tons. But it is now not uncommon to see these trains stretch to 12,000 feet, sometimes as much as 14,000 feet (more than four kilometers), weighing up to 18,000 tons ... CP estimates, for example, that the labour costs alone on a typical transcontinental train are now 30% lower than they would be if it was using smaller trains."

From the Financial Post of Canada, February 26, 2011

It's Time to Take a Stand

Right now, in the wake of Lac Megantic, Quebec; Cassleton, ND and a series of other high profile train wrecks, there is a public outcry against the railroad. Communities are concerned for their safety and security and their environmental health. As railroaders, we know that the safest means of transport is the railroad - far safer than roads and highways, inland waterways and even pipelines. But the rail industry has taken advantage of a lax regulatory environment, conservative pro-business governments and weakened unions across North America to roll the dice on safety. It's time for railroad workers, community and environmental activists to come together and take a stand.

As railroad workers, we do not wish to see our freight rerouted onto other modes of transport. Not only would this be highly inefficient, it would prove far more dangerous in the long run. But what we do want is to run our trains as safely as possible. This means limiting the tonnage and length to appropriate levels that do not create difficult or dangerous operating conditions for the train crew and do not represent a threat to trackside communities.

Keep in mind that this is not a panacea. To ensure safe railroad operations we must do more than simply limit the size of trains. Running a safe railroad means ensuring that every train has at least two crew members, that track and rolling stock are properly maintained and inspected, and that enough trainmen and engineers are available, allowing adequate time off work and plenty of rest so they are fatigue free. But these issues are for another leaflet.

To learn more about the struggle against single employee train operations, and the efforts to build genuine union-based programs to achieve a safe working environment, please see the RWU website at www.railroadworker-unionited.org and check out *RWU Campaigns*.

"Blocked railway crossings are not only an inconvenience for hundreds of thousands of North Americans daily, but also pose a significant risk to emergency vehicle response times (e.g., ambulances, fire trucks, police vehicles)...."

From the website *Railroaded*

Long & Heavy Trains are a Hazard!

Overly long and heavy trains create a dangerous and unsafe situation for a number of reasons. Here are a some of them:

- 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 -- long and heavy trains hold the potential for more slack action in the train, creating 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 at 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" in order to avoid being blocked for long periods, resulting in grade crossing accidents and fatalities.

***If you agree that these overly long and heavy trains are in fact a menace, please join with Railroad Workers United and thousands of train and engine service employees across North America and fight back!
See the back of this leaflet for some ideas to get you and your co-workers started.***

You Can Help Make the Railroad Safer!

To succeed in this campaign to reduce the length and tonnage of freight trains, we need the input and participation of all railroad workers, and their family members too! Here's just a few things that you can do:

- ◆ Make copies of this leaflet and distribute them to your co-workers
- ◆ Write your Congressman and Senators..
- ◆ Talk to your fellow workers about the issue and the need to fight against single employee crews.
- ◆ Bring the issue to your local union for support and endorsement.
- ◆ Make a financial donation to help pay for flyers like this one.
- ◆ Join Railroad Workers United and help us build the movement for unity, democracy, solidarity, and action!
- ◆ See the RWU website at www.railroadworkersunited.org for more materials, ideas, and information.

Sign Me Up!! I want to join Railroad Workers United

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Cell Phone _____

Email Address _____

Union _____ Local # _____ Employer _____

Terminal _____ Years of Service _____

Union Position _____

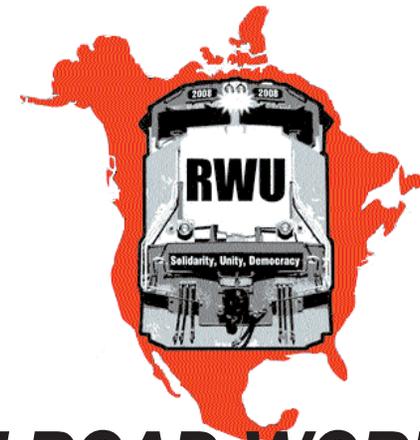
I'd like to join for (check one):

1 year \$50.00 2 Years \$90.00 3 Years \$120.00

Clip and mail together with your dues to:
RWU Secretary P.O. Box 2131 Reno, NV. 89505
OR join on-line at www.railroadworkersunited.org

Long & Heavy Freight Trains

Hazardous to Railroad Workers, the Environment, & the General Public



RAILROAD WORKERS UNITED

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