In June, Railroad Workers United formally announced a new Campaign to Oppose Precision Scheduled Railroading (PSR). This darling of Wall Street investors is a scourge to railroad workers, shippers, passengers, trackside communities and the nation. We have created a “tool kit” for railroaders to make use of in the fight against PSR which includes: a basic resolution explaining why we are opposed to PSR; a bi-fold flyer; various posters and cartoons; a Press Release; an editorial comment on PSR; and commentaries by industry and union officials condemning PSR.

RWU urges all railroad workers and all rail unions to enlist in the fight. PSR serves only the wealthy and does nothing for the rest of us. It’s time we think of the rail industry as a national asset, not just as a cash cow for hedge fund investors.

Because PSR is negatively affecting practically all North American railroad workers from all crafts, all unions and all carriers, it affords us the opportunity to unite and fight back as ONE. PSR has presented the rail unions a golden opportunity to form a united front, a reason to come together and form a single bargaining coalition to take on the carriers in this upcoming round of bargaining. RWU has taken this opportunity to draft an “Open Letter to All Rail Labor Union Officials” in the hope of motivating them to do just that. (See the full text of the letter below).

This is not an easy fight. Combatting PSR does not fall neatly into either the “bargaining” nor the “legislative” realm of the union. In fact, the right to increase or decrease forces, implement operating plans, and run the railroad as they see fit is ground that has largely been ceded to the carriers. The workforce has traditionally accepted its passive role as simply bargaining over wages and benefits. We have yielded to the rail carriers the unfettered right to make decisions about infrastructure, investment, operations, employment levels, implementation of new technologies and more. PSR has given us reason to reconsider our role as railroad workers. Perhaps it is time to question the basic underpinnings of the rail industry, the basic relationship between carriers and unions, and to start to think outside the box of what is possible. We simply can no longer remain passive while PSR destroys us and our industry.