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Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street Southwest
Washington D.C. 20423

RE: EP 770 Rail Service Hearing

Dear Chairman Oberman,

I have worked as a train, yard and engineer employee for one of the class one railways for almost 26 years. (Hired out in September 1996). In my career I have seen numerous changes. Some were minor in the grand scheme of things and others were very significant. I want to state for the record that the current change of policy and practice is tectonic in its width and breadth. Never have I seen or experienced such a concerted effort to make every location as miserable as possible to work at. I do not believe for one minute that this Hi-Viz policy is just a coincidence. In my opinion it is part of a concerted effort to create resignations and terminations so that the class one railways can stand in front of a hearing much like this one and say something like "We cannot retain employees. They keep quitting. We cannot get new replacements to stay or apply either." "If you would just allow us to go to one man crew we could actually staff and move the nations freight, but until then our hands are tied."

I won't cover the new draconian Hi-Viz policy in this letter, but I wanted this board to be aware that 90% of the resignations and terminations that the class one is complaining about are a result of the heinous Hi-Viz policy. That policy is having its desired effect. It is depleting manpower, and the railways want to now say the fault is not theirs, "Its those darn lazy railroaders who refuse to come to work". The manpower shortage is a self-inflicted wound by the railways.

The supply chain choke point on the railways, likewise, is a manufactured crisis. Up until the last 48 hours we had specific instructions to put the engines into idle if our speed increased over 40 mph on track where authorized speed is 70 mph. The Trip Optimizer technology until recently was programmed to auto run the trains at speeds sometimes 45mph below the authorized track speed. The railways may also tell you that they have removed the 5/50 throttle restrictions. This is a red herring. The vast majority of trains run, are required to utilize a "cruise control" type technology (Trip Optimizer), and the programming in that technology runs the trains at guess what speeds? You are correct. Speeds, mind numbingly lower and slower, than anything that has been seen before.

On a different subject, the railways have been annotating train delay with the excerpt "Crews not available". This once again is an outright falsehood. There are almost always crew available. The exception comes when managers hold crews at the away from home terminal so long that the home terminal runs out of staffing. This is purely a failure and refusal to manage manpower.

The never-ending quest for profitability that has been placed over the needs of our nation must be accounted for. I would suggest a partial re-regulation of the railway industry until the senior managers understand that the needs of our nations supply chain and workforce, outweigh their insatiable hunger for productivity increases per employee and unchecked profits.

I will apologize for the ungainly gathering of words and phrases in this letter. It has been made very clear that if I refer to any one railway that I will be terminated for violation of General Code of operating rule,

1.2.6, 1.6 and 1.9. I would like nothing more than to be able to testify in person, but the draconian Hi-Viz policy has put a pinch on ANY personal time off.

Best regards

Steven E Snyder,

Local chairman for the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen.

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