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September 1, 2022

The Honorable Martin Oberman, Chairman
United States Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street SW
Washington, DC 20423

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RE: Docket EP770

Dear Chairman Oberman:

I am writing in reference to the August 22, 2022 letter submitted to the Surface Transportation Board by Mr. Joshua Therrien, Local Chairman of the SMART-TD Local 212 concerning our Selkirk, NY Yard. At CSX, we value employee feedback, and above all else our company is committed to providing a safe work environment while striving to provide reliable service for our customers.

I personally visited Selkirk yard over the course of three days this week. I walked the ballast line with employees, reviewed switching processes, and talked through the operations with both union and non-union employees. It was a great interaction with our employees and I am proud of the way they have risen to the occasion. Everyone is working together to expedite the recovery process and I would like to assure the Board that we have the right plan in place to get it done.

Selkirk Switching Operations

As referenced in the letter, CSX recently changed the manner in which it conducts Remote Control Operations ("RCO") at Selkirk. In an effort to improve operational and manpower efficiency, CSX moved from two-person RCO switching operations to a one-person system. This operation is in full compliance with applicable Federal Railroad Administration ("FRA") regulations – including hours of service requirements – and consistent with standard practices throughout the industry, including at various other CSX yards. The meeting referenced in the letter was between CSX representatives and the FRA to review the operational plan and ensure the parties are aligned on its safe design. Of relevance to your agency, these redesigned RCO switching operations should positively impact crew availability and improve customer service.

From a broader perspective, I cannot emphasize enough the importance of being able to modernize our railroad with new technology. Technological advancement is essential to ongoing improvements to customer service and safety. It is also critical to our ability to compete with other modes of transportation, particularly trucks. In this area, the stakes are high and we respectfully ask this agency and other governmental entities to support our pursuit of technologies that enable us to safely and responsibly grow the business. If we are restrained from adopting transformative technologies, we will not be able to meet the demands of our customers or keep pace with our competition.

Safety and Regulatory Compliance

I would like to underscore the importance of employee safety and regulatory compliance. CSX takes allegations of harassment and intimidation with the utmost seriousness, and we do not tolerate retaliatory behavior. Employees are encouraged to report any such behavior and have numerous ways to do so, including anonymously. But as it relates to the new RCO switching procedures, CSX has not increased work hours beyond permissible limits.

We have come a long way in furthering our safety culture and we have made meaningful progress in improving the general work environment. The three most recent years between 2019-2021 were CSX's safest three years on record with the lowest total of FRA reportable train accidents. We also led the industry with the lowest FRA reportable injury rate two of the last three years (2019 and 2020). This is due to the strong safety culture demonstrated by our dedicated railroaders and we intend to continue to foster that culture.

Service

As your agency is well aware, crew shortages have been the root cause of the service issues experienced in certain regions of our network. Selkirk has endured an unusual surge in vacation entitlements, with the current vacation rate being double the typical rate in Selkirk this time of year. We expect those entitlements to begin normalizing after Labor Day weekend. We are also diligently working to support our Selkirk crew base. Earlier this week, ten Train & Engine employees relocated to Selkirk on a temporary basis to provide additional service support, and we anticipate another ten T&E to relocate to Selkirk next week.

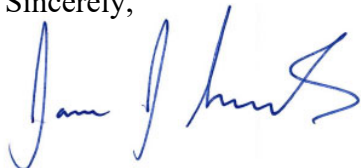
As a result of the above-described efforts, we are already seeing service improvements and expect those to steadily continue through Labor Day weekend and the month of September.

As to our ongoing hiring efforts, we have line of sight on further additions to our crew base in Selkirk. We currently have seven new-hire conductors training on the job in the Selkirk zone, three more in training at our REDI center, and an additional seventeen new hires scheduled soon to enter training at the REDI center.

More broadly, our ongoing hiring efforts across the network are producing results. We have been showing steady progress in increasing our total T&E employee headcount and that improvement has brought about increases in system velocity and other key performance indicators.

Please do not hesitate to let me know should you like to further discuss or have any questions.

Sincerely,



Jamie J. Boychuk