



# BROTHERHOOD OF LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS & TRAINMEN

A Division of the Rail Conference—International Brotherhood of Teamsters

## Wisconsin State Legislative Board – Chairman

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### WISLB Chairman Report

Brothers and Sisters,

This is a general overview of the WILB Chairman activities for June/July 2019.

#### Meetings:

- Division 209
- Division 188
- WI Congressman Glenn Grothman
- WI Governor Tony Evers
- WI SMART Director Andy Hauk
- Congressional and Senate District of Colombia

#### Some Legislation update:

The Safe Freight Act of 2019 was introduced in the United States Senate on June 26, S. 1979 a bill that mirrors the H.R. 1748 in the U.S. House of Representatives (SAFE FREIGHT ACT).

- H.R. 1748 to date, are 93 Co-Sponsors of this Bill - 84 Democrat and 9 Republican
- S. 1979 to date, are 12 Co-Sponsors of this Bill - 10 Democrat and 2 Independent
- BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce will testify before the House Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials at a hearing titled “The State of the Rail Workforce” at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, June 20
- Wisconsin SMART and BLET have taken an aggressive action to have LR’s have members, family, friend and neighbors fill out post cards that we send to Congress. Continuance that have filled them out, have been receiving letters from their Congressman.
- BLET National Officers, 11 BLET State Chairman, along with myself, went to see Congressional and Senate Leaders on July 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> 2019 to address the importance of these Bills. In total, we visited and had meetings with over 140 + Congressional and Senate Offices.

On July 9, 2018 Tex Mex unilaterally replaced U.S. citizen crewmembers with Mexican train crews between Laredo Yard and the International Bridge, more than 9 miles away. BLET declared the action constituted a major dispute under the Railway Labor Act and had threatened

to strike, but a Federal judge issued a preliminary injunction that prohibited a BLET job action over the issue.

- BLET National Officers, 11 BLET State Chairmen, along with myself, went to see Congressional and Senate Leaders on July 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> 2019 to address the importance of this issue also. In total, we visited and had meetings with over 140 + Congressional and Senate Offices. We have been told, that Congress is going to introduce legislation to address this cross border issue.

On May 24, 2019 the BLET was informed that the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) had released a notice, withdrawing a 2016 notice of proposed rulemaking establishing a “Minimum Train Crew Size” for most rail freight operations. This notice also included the intent to preempt any state laws in currently in effect.

- WI Governor Evers and I had a meeting about this issue as Wisconsin currently has this law. The Governor is fully supportive of “Two Person Crew Staffing” in the Wisconsin Rail Industry and supportive of keeping the current law into effect.
- WISLB has reached out to the Wisconsin Attorneys General Office.
- The BLET and SMART are in a joint efforts to filing in the Circuit Courts.
- Wisconsin Stat.192.25 "Minimum of Two Person on every Train in Wisconsin" has not been preempted at this time.

### **US Rail Traffic Report from AAR;**

The Association of American Railroads (AAR) today reported U.S. rail traffic for the week ending June 8, 2019. This weeks total U.S. weekly rail traffic was 513,099 carloads and intermodal units, down 8.5 percent compared with the same week last year. The total carloads for the week ending June 8 were 246,758 carloads, down 9.1 percent compared with the same week in 2018, while U.S. weekly intermodal volume was 266,341 containers and trailers, down 8.0 percent compared to 2018.

The Association of American Railroads (AAR) reported U.S. rail traffic for the week ending July 6, 2019. This weeks total U.S. weekly rail traffic was 448,459 carloads and intermodal units, down 7.5 percent compared with the same week last year. The total carloads for the week ending July 6 were 220,759 carloads, down 8.2 percent compared with the same week in 2018, while U.S. weekly intermodal volume was 227,700 containers and trailers, down 6.9 percent compared to 2018.

## **Wisconsin DOT Announces Plans for Increased Hiawatha Service;**

The agency has budget authority of \$35 million, which qualifies it to apply for grants from the U.S. Department of Transportation. If the WisDOT receives the grants, it will have much of the funding needed for infrastructure projects required to support an increase in service frequency from seven round trips per day to 10 per day. The service expansion will require \$195 million, and the state has already received two grants to begin work on the project.

### **Some of June/July Correspondence:**

- FRA Region 4
- BLET National Office
- BLET Washington Office
- CN/WC General Committee
- WISLB LR's
- UP General Committee
- WI Governor's Office
- WI Attorneys General Office
- Congressional and Senate District of Colombia
- Democratic Party of Wisconsin
- WI SMART Office
- WI Teamster Joint Council #39
- WI ADCC (Wisconsin Assembly Democratic Campaign Committee)
- WI SDCC (Wisconsin Senate Democratic Campaign Committee)
- BLET State Chairman from; Illinois, Minnesota, Michigan, Indiana, Missouri, Arizona, Tennessee, District of Colombia, New Mexico, Montana, California and Texas.

We need to continue working in conjunction with all organizations, to keep our members and rails safe.

Respectfully,



Chuck Schulz  
Chairman/WISLB