

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 dangerous and inefficient long and heavy trains.
- Bring the issue to your local union for support and endorsement.
- Make a financial donation to RWU to help pay for flyers like this one.
- Join Railroad Workers United and help us build the movement for Solidarity, unity, democracy, and action!
- See the RWU website at www.railroadworkersunited.org for more materials, ideas, and information.

Sign me up as a Member of Railroad Workers United

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____

City _____ State/Province _____ Post Code _____

Country _____ Email _____

Phone _____ Cell Phone _____

Union _____ Local # _____

Railroad _____ Craft _____

Work Terminal _____ Year of Service _____

Position(s) held in your union (if any) _____

I am a (check one): RR Employee RR Retiree RR Family Member Other _____

Please check to affirm this statement: "I am not a manager/officer of a railroad."

Mail this form together with at least one year's dues (\$50.00) to:

Railroad Workers United
P.O. Box 32
Roopville, GA. 30170

Or apply and pay dues online at www.railroadworkersunited.org

Long & Heavy Freight Trains

Hazardous to Railroad Workers, the Environment, and the Public



Railroad Workers United
www.railroadworkersunited.org
info@railroadworkersunited.org
202-798-3327

The Freight Trains Just Keep Getting Longer and Heavier for One Reason - Super Profits

Since the 1990s, the rail carriers have been expanding the length and tonnage of trains to the point where today it is not uncommon to see 10,000 foot trains, weighing in at 20,000 tons. And as car capacity increases, unit trains of grain, coal, crude oil and other bulk commodities regularly exceed 15,000 tons. And the rail carriers more and more are running trains up to 15,000 feet or longer (more than 3 miles!) While the big Class One 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, shippers, 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 Unite and Fight Back!

Right now, in the wake of East Palestine, OH, Lac-Megantic, Quebec; Casselton, ND and a series of other high profile train wrecks in the past decade, there is a public outcry against the railroads. Communities are concerned for their safety and security and their environmental health. As railroaders, we know that the safest and most efficient 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, shippers, 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 and efficiently 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.

"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*

These Long and Heavy Trains are Truly a Menace

Overly long and heavy trains create an inefficient, dangerous, and unsafe situation for a number of reasons. The longer and heavier the train:

- 1 -** The more difficult it is - and the more time it takes - to slow or to stop such a train, reducing the train's overall velocity from terminal to terminal.
- 2 -** The greater 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 more severe the train wreck if and when such a train does derail;
- 4 -** The more difficult it is for the train crew to safely operate, inspect, work, test, and otherwise get such a train over the road, again, causing a reduction in the train's overall velocity terminal to terminal;
- 5 -** The more likely that the train's crew will work on average, a longer tours-of-duty, resulting in fatigue, more time at the away-from-home terminal, and a lower quality of work and home life;
- 6 -** The more likely it is to suffer air brake problems, related delays and dangers, especially in colder weather, again, reducing the train's overall velocity;
- 7 -** The greater the likelihood of it blocking roadway and pedestrian crossings, creating at best, an inconvenience to the public, and at worst, an inability to provide emergency services when needed. These regularly blocked crossings then 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.
- 8 -** The more likely that the train will not "fit" in certain - or even all - sidings on the subdivision, creating excruciatingly slow "saw-byes" at meeting points, and once again, reducing the train's overall velocity terminal to terminal;
- 9 -** The more likely that such a train will take more effort and time to build ("double") at its initial terminal and to yard at its final terminal, often taking headroom on the mainline. Again, this reduces the train's overall velocity terminal to terminal, delays other trains from using the mainline into and out of the terminal, and blocks important road crossings in communities adjacent to these yards;
- 10 -** The more such a train will contribute to the overall reduction in "track capacity" of the subdivision and the railroad as a whole. They are a major contributing factor as to why the industry is moving 21% less freight in 2022 vs. 2006.