

Resolutions

RESOLUTION #2

Admonishing Precision Scheduled Railroading (PSR)

Submitted by Delegate Robert Guy, SMART Transportation Division #1

WHEREAS, for nearly 200 years freight rail has played a major role in the economic prosperity of the United States and has served as the backbone of domestic commerce; and

WHEREAS, Illinois serves as the freight rail hub of the nation, the only state where all Class I railroads operate, along with substantial regional and shortline railroad operations that commingle with the Midwest hub of Amtrak and Metra commuter rail; and

WHEREAS, the dedicated work of freight rail employees have enabled these railroads to experience continual and reliable record profits and revenues, especially over the last four decades; and

WHEREAS, these record profits are seemingly not enough for an industry that is now answering to short-term investors and hedge fund managers that seek to squeeze out every last cent of profit; and

WHEREAS, Precision Scheduled Railroading (PSR) seems to be the operating model of choice to satisfy Wall Street's greed; and

WHEREAS, the PSR model relies on eliminating assets and manpower, to the detriment of their customers and safety; and

WHEREAS, the ultimate goal of PSR is to cut every possible corner and to slash every penny out of a capital-intensive industry that needs long-term perspective to thrive; and

WHEREAS, longer and heavier trains are a byproduct of PSR, proven by a recent Government Accountability Office (GAO) report that found average train length has increased by about 25 percent since 2008, and carriers are regularly operating trains up to three miles long; and

WHEREAS, this can have tragic consequences on local communities where longer trains block grade crossings and can make it difficult for emergency response personnel to respond to incidents; and

WHEREAS, PSR and the longer trains associated with it, along with the train dispatching practices of host railroads, have caused significant delays and declining on-time performance (OTP) for Intercity Passenger Rail (Amtrak) in the Midwest; and

WHEREAS, while passenger rail priority is statutorily required on host railroads, PSR practices cause many Midwest routes to experience extremely poor OTP, in fact, three Midwestern routes were at the very bottom of the nation's 28 state-supported route's OTP, with Illinois' Illini/Saluki route ranking last, at 26 percent OTP, even though federal law has set the standard for passenger rail OTP as averaging at least 80 percent on-time arrival over two consecutive quarters; and

WHEREAS, the Federal Railroad Administration has completely failed to address these substantial safety risks that longer trains present; and

WHEREAS, it is abundantly clear that PSR puts rail workers and communities at considerable and unacceptable risk; therefore be it

RESOLVED, the Illinois AFL-CIO admonishes rail carriers who prescribe to Precision Scheduled Railroading and the negative effects it has on rail workers, the public and the overall viability and future of the freight and passenger rail industry; and be it further

RESOLVED, the Illinois AFL-CIO will continue to vigorously support rail workers from all crafts as they deal with the negative effects of PSR; and be it finally

RESOLVED, suitable copies of this resolution shall be delivered to the Transportation Trades Department (TTD) of the national AFL-CIO.