



**Chris Spear**  
President & Chief Executive Officer

September 9, 2022

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Peter DeFazio  
Chairman, Committee on T&I  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Sam Graves  
Ranking Member, Committee on T&I  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Minority Leader, U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Chair, Senate HELP Committee  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Minority Leader, U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Burr  
Ranking Member, Senate HELP Committee  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Majority Leader Schumer, Minority Leaders McCarthy and McConnell, Chairs DeFazio and Murray and Ranking Members Graves and Burr,

The American Trucking Associations (ATA) is closely following the ongoing labor negotiations in the railroad industry because of the significant potential impact to our members and the country. We write today to request your leadership regarding the potential implementation of a contract between all parties in the freight rail industry by the end of the cooling off period – September 16, 2022 -- to avoid a debilitating and unnecessary labor disruption that could cost the country billions each day.

While trucking and rail companies compete for ground freight, trucking is also the largest customer of the rail industry, and both industries rely on one another to keep our supply chains healthy and efficient. We deliver the last mile of virtually every product that rail transports. Particularly through “intermodal” shipments involving containers moved by ships, railroads and trucks, the industries depend on each other to meet domestic and international demand. The Intermodal Association of North America (IANA) reports that in 2021 alone, transportation companies moved 18,435,249 intermodal units. Idling all 7,000 long distance daily freight trains in the U.S. would require more than 460,000 additional long-haul trucks every day, which is not possible based on equipment availability and an existing shortage of 80,000 drivers. As such, any rail service disruption will create havoc in the supply chain and fuel inflationary pressures across the board.

Merely delaying a possible strike through congressional action will simply exacerbate the concerns of consumers and industry. A possible strike or lockout in October or November is arguably worse than one next week—although any disruption will cost the nation billions of dollars of lost productivity. Moreover, our members and every other business in America will have to maintain and update contingency plans unless the rail matter is resolved expeditiously. Additional insecurity placed on the still fragile U.S. supply chain – as we recover from COVID and other supply chain stressors and move



towards the holiday season -- will harm the economy at large and individual Americans. It is therefore vital that agreements be finalized for all contracts before the end of the cooling off period.

We understand that five of the twelve unions involved in the negotiations have tentatively agreed to a new contract based on Presidential Emergency Board recommendations and are seeking formal ratification by their membership. Others are reportedly in the process of agreeing to the same terms. That would appear to establish a clear pattern in the industry. Absent timely mutual agreement between labor and management on any alternative for the remaining contracts, we would encourage Congress to act as it has historically done and use that pattern to implement a solution.

We sympathize with both sides of the negotiations, understanding the unprecedented challenges in the labor market and the desire of employees for improved working conditions and pay. However, from our perspective, the pattern provides security for employees and rail as well as its customers, and includes significant benefits for employees that will be delayed in the event Congress declines to act: annual wage increases through 2024 --including retroactive wage increases from 2020 -- and annual bonuses. The five unions in the process of securing final ratification by their members represent a cross section of the industry and include the International Association of Machinists, the Transportation Communications Union, the Brotherhood of Railway Carmen, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers and the American Train Dispatchers Association.

In our experience, it is always best for parties to resolve a contract dispute mutually, but given the approaching end of the cooling off period, it is vital that Congress be ready to act. Absent final binding agreements by the deadline, Congress should take swift action to implement the pattern established by the five tentative agreements and the PEB recommendations. We encourage you to make that known publicly to the parties to reinforce the importance of the final ratified agreements, both to the parties involved and to the entire nation.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Chris Spear

President & CEO

American Trucking Associations