



**August 4, 2021**



## **Senate Begins Debate on Infrastructure Bill**

On Monday, the Senate opened up debate on the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), an approximately \$1 trillion infrastructure package resulting from weeks of negotiation by a bipartisan group of senators led by Arizona's Kyrsten Sinema and Rob Portman of Ohio.

"We congratulate the Senate for taking this momentous step forward in advancing such a sweeping infrastructure proposal – and we applaud the spirit of bipartisanship, hard work and compromise that allowed for this moment to happen. While more details are still to come and many will be debated in the days ahead, the deal holds great promise for the short line freight rail industry, the thousands of customers we serve in critical industries such as agriculture and manufacturing throughout the country, and for America's economic future. The proposal will make key investments into programs that short line freight rail projects will be able to compete for, such as CRISI, RAISE, and INFRA, which can be transformational for short lines as they look to improve service, add capacity, enhance safety, upgrade tracks, and rehabilitate bridges to move America's freight," said ASLRRRA President Chuck Baker.

ASLRRRA [is pleased](#) with the bill, as it contains many of the rail funding pieces from the previous [Surface Transportation Investment Act \(STIA\)](#) marked up in the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee, led by Chair Maria Cantwell (D-Wash.) and Ranking Member Roger Wicker (R-Miss.).

Where the Commerce Committee's bill includes proposing to spend as much as \$1 billion per year for Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) grants, the IIJA goes even further, featuring an emergency appropriations section guaranteeing \$1 billion annually for CRISI grants.

The combined bill also includes Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) grants and other funding opportunities for short line railroads, \$600 million per year for a new grade crossing elimination program and more. The bill also makes no problematic policy changes concerning minimum crew size, shipment of liquified natural gas or other issues ASLRRRA opposes.

If the IIJA makes it past the Senate, it will be taken up by the House, where it remains to be seen how many of these provisions will withstand revisions there. ASLRRRA's legislative team will continue to monitor the progress of the IIJA and any changes that speak to short line interests.

### **Reserve a Booth at the 2021 ASLRRRA Annual Conference in Phoenix**

Exhibit sales for the 2021 ASLRRRA Conference and Exhibition are now open to all ASLRRRA member companies in good standing. The first round of sales included those companies that had reserved booth space for our 2020 show at the Gaylord Texan in Grapevine, Texas.

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The conference will be held Nov. 17 to 19 at the Phoenix Convention Center in Phoenix, Ariz. Please contact ASLRRA's [Kathy Keeney](#) for more information, to reserve a space or to access the digital floorplan.

ASLRRA plans to open registration for its annual conference soon, so look out for an announcement from the Association in the coming weeks.



### **RRB Discusses Annual Financial Report in Most Recent Q&A**

The Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) summarizes its annual financial reports in the most recent version of its [question and answer \(Q&A\) series](#).

The RRB is required by law to submit annual financial reports and triennial actuarial valuations to Congress. The annual reports discuss the financial condition of the railroad retirement system and the railroad unemployment insurance system. Also included in the RRB's

reports to Congress are recommendations for changes that are necessary to preserve the system's solvency. Complete copies of the RRB's financial reports can be found [here](#).

### **ASLRRA Updates Part 229 Program of the 243 Training Program**

As required by Part 243, ASLRRA is advising program adopters of a recent update to the Part 229 On-the-Job Training (OJT) Checklist. ASLRRA added additional tasks to the Part 229 OJT checklist, prompting an informational filing to the Federal Railroad Administration, which received approval on July 27, 2021.

The OJT checklist, showing a revision date of July 27, 2021, has been updated on the [ASLRRA website](#). Members must log in to access the new information. Please update your program accordingly. Contact [JR Gelnar](#) with any questions.

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## ASLRRRA Sends Letter to Representatives Regarding Transportation Appropriations Bill

In a [recent letter](#) to House Appropriations Committee Chair Rosa DeLauro (D-Conn.), Ranking Member Kay Granger (R-Texas), Transportation, Housing, Urban Development and Related Agencies Subcommittee Chair David Price (D-N.C.) and subcommittee Ranking Member Mario Diaz-Balart (R-Fla.), ASLRRRA offered thanks for their work on the fiscal year 2022 transportation appropriations bill.

The letter expressed support for the legislation and noted specific provisions that are beneficial to the short line railroad industry. For instance, ASLRRRA thanked the committee for increased funding for Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) grants, but encouraged even more money be made available for the program, and asked that short line freight rail projects be ensured a level-playing field when competing for CRISI grants.

ASLRRRA also noted its appreciation for continued funding for the Short Line Safety Institute (SLSI), and applauded the committee for instructing government agencies to make sure policy decisions concerning truck size and weight limits are guided by proper science and research.

### ASLRRRA Compliance Assessments



“ Keeping up with federal rule-making and regulatory interpretation is difficult at best, so the ability to review all of our regulatory programs with the knowledge base of the ASLRRRA was invaluable. ”

Visit [www.aslrra.org](http://www.aslrra.org) to learn more!

## ASLRRRA New Members

Know a company that would benefit from joining and participating in ASLRRRA? Please contact ASLRRRA's Vice President of Membership and Business Development [Kathy Keeney](#) via email or on (202) 585-3439.

## ASLRRRA Welcomes Two Suppliers to Its Membership Rolls



[PFL Petroleum Services Ltd.](#), based in Naples, Fla., is a full-service railcar company covering the North American railcar market. Services include: railcar leasing and sales, maintenance or repair, cleaning and flaring, third-party railcar inspection, railcar scrapping, railcar storage as well as end-of-lease assistance. Our primary contact is President [Curtis Chandler](#), who can also be reached on (239) 390-2885. Many thanks to Michael Haeg from [Rio Grande Pacific Corp.](#) for the assist with this return membership.



[ThyssenTransp, LLC](#), based in Chicago, Ill., was established in 2014 to provide sourcing services and aftermarket support to the North American rail sector. A U.S. subsidiary of Cadidar Transport Equipment, Ltd., ThyssenTransp works with freight and transit customers in North America as well as car builders in both North America and China. Our primary contact is VP Business Development [Michael Ricci](#), who can also be reached on (312) 888-0108.

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## ASLRRA Announcements

### Nominations Sought for ASLRRA Associate Business Member Board Seat

ASLRRA is seeking nominations for individuals wishing to run for election to the board of directors representing Associate Business Members (suppliers).

The Nominating Committee Co-Chairs for this year are two former board members, Steve Friedland of Short Line Data Systems and Beth Garguilo of Lincoln Transportation Insurance Brokers. They will be assisted by Kathy Keeney, ASLRRA's vice president of membership and business development, who serves as staff liaison to the Supplier Committee.

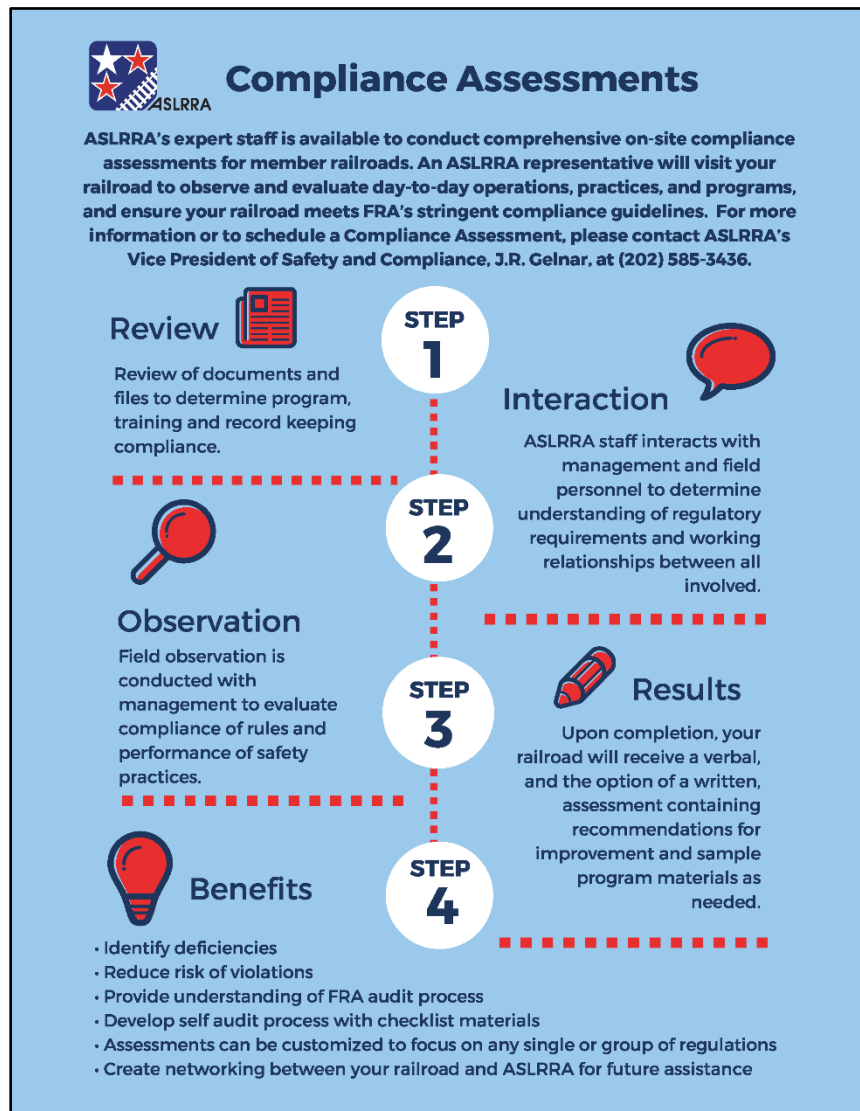
There are two board seats representing Associate Business Members that are filled via election from the membership and there is one board vacancy that we will need to fill at the annual convention in Phoenix, Ariz. The term for Shea McLaughlin from CDL Electric is coming to an end. Jim Hanlon from Herzog Technologies holds the other Associate Board Member position.

The term for a director is two years. The board responsibility involves attending two in-person board meetings annually and several conference calls throughout the year. Board members are also expected to attend the annual convention and regional meetings, and are urged to attend Railroad Day on Capitol Hill. The newly elected board member will also serve on the Supplier Committee and work to provide agenda items to benefit the membership.

We are reaching out to gather nominations at this time from candidates who work for Associate Business Members (suppliers) in good standing. The nomination period will remain open until **close of business on Sept. 8**, and any member wishing to suggest themselves or nominate a candidate should contact one of the Nominating Committee leaders by then. Candidates should supply the Nominating Committee with a short biography, photo and a few sentences about why they would like to serve on the ASLRRA Board of Directors. They are also welcome to provide a two-minute video outlining their qualifications. A ballot will be distributed this fall to the primary contact of every Associate Business Member company in good standing.

Please contact Garguilo or Friedland with any questions, to nominate yourself or to suggest another candidate. Garguilo can be reached on [Beth.Garguilo@lincolnins.com](mailto:Beth.Garguilo@lincolnins.com) or (315) 768-6110 and Friedland can be reached on [sfriedland@sdsrocs.com](mailto:sfriedland@sdsrocs.com) or (973) 769-6505.


## ASLRRRA Compliance Assessments are a Valuable Members-Only Resource



**ASLRRRA**


### Compliance Assessments

ASLRRRA's expert staff is available to conduct comprehensive on-site compliance assessments for member railroads. An ASLRRRA representative will visit your railroad to observe and evaluate day-to-day operations, practices, and programs, and ensure your railroad meets FRA's stringent compliance guidelines. For more information or to schedule a Compliance Assessment, please contact ASLRRRA's Vice President of Safety and Compliance, J.R. Gelnar, at (202) 585-3436.

**Review** 


Review of documents and files to determine program, training and record keeping compliance.

**STEP 1**

**Interaction** 


ASLRRRA staff interacts with management and field personnel to determine understanding of regulatory requirements and working relationships between all involved.

**STEP 2**

**Observation** 


Field observation is conducted with management to evaluate compliance of rules and performance of safety practices.

**STEP 3**

**Results** 

Upon completion, your railroad will receive a verbal, and the option of a written, assessment containing recommendations for improvement and sample program materials as needed.

**STEP 4**

**Benefits** 

- Identify deficiencies
- Reduce risk of violations
- Provide understanding of FRA audit process
- Develop self audit process with checklist materials
- Assessments can be customized to focus on any single or group of regulations
- Create networking between your railroad and ASLRRRA for future assistance

ASLRRRA is dedicated to railroad safety, and the Association strives to help its members adopt, implement and maintain industry best practices throughout their operations by offering a wealth of safety and compliance resources, including expert compliance assessments that are available exclusively to ASLRRRA members.

During a comprehensive, on-site [compliance assessment](#), an ASLRRRA representative will visit the railroad to observe and evaluate day-to-day operations and compliance practices. The assessment can be tailored to fit each railroad's specific requirements and includes both on-site interaction with management and field personnel and a verbal and written assessment and recommendations.

Visit [www.aslrra.org/safety](http://www.aslrra.org/safety) to learn more about compliance assessments and the full array of safety and compliance resources available through ASLRRRA.

## ASLRRRA Members Welcome to Attend Joint Committee Meeting Next Week

ASLRRRA will hold its Joint Committee Meeting Aug. 11-12 at the Northern Pacific Billings Depot in Billings, Mont., and any ASLRRRA member can attend.

The meeting offers a good opportunity to learn more about the Association's committees, their responsibilities and how they operate. Members must [log in](#) to the ASLRRRA website to access [this link](#) to learn more about the meeting and register to attend.

## Jake Award Winners Can Now Access Link to Online Certificates

ASLRRRA members who have earned a Jake Award can go [online](#) to download and print a copy of their certificate. Congratulations to [this year's winners](#)!

**ASLRRRA SAFETY & TRAINING**  
**Reasonable Suspicion Drug & Alcohol Signs  
and Symptoms Training Video**  
Visit [www.aslrra.org/safety](http://www.aslrra.org/safety) for more info



## ASLRRRA Webinars – Live or On-Demand

### Upcoming Webinars

[Hours of Service Pilot Program](#) – Aug. 18, 2021 (NOTE NEW DATE)

This webinar, open only to ASLRRRA members, is a discussion of the pilot program being developed by ASLRRRA, which would allow train employees to initiate on-duty periods between the hours of midnight and 6 am, on six consecutive days followed by 24 hours of rest before returning to work. ASLRRRA is seeking interested railroads to participate in a fatigue study approved by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA). This informational webinar will help you to decide if this waiver is right for your railroad.

### View Recorded Webinars Presented by ASLRRRA's In-House Regulatory Experts

Federal regulatory procedures and requirements can be complicated. ASLRRRA's subject-matter experts have presented several webinars to help members understand and comply with different regulations, and recordings of these webinars can be found in ASLRRRA's [On-Demand Webinar](#) library.

Presentation materials from the webinars are also available for download in PDF format. Look for the sessions featured below, which can be found in the Regulatory category:

- Emergency Docket Waivers
- FRA Penalties and Violations
- FRA Regulatory & Program Requirements for Short Lines, Parts 1 and 2

ASLRRRA's online resource library offers more than 150 webinar recordings on a variety of topics. Visit [aslrra.org/webinars](http://aslrra.org/webinars) and select the On Demand Webinars button to view a complete list of all available recordings. Access is free to ASLRRRA members, and by subscription for non-members.

[Click here](#) for more ASLRRRA events.

## Industry Events and Announcements

[Click here](#) for more industry events.

Views & News is published by American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association. Please contact [Amy Krouse](#), editor, with questions or comments.