



# VIEWS & NEWS

A publication of the American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association

June 15, 2022

## In This Issue:

- **Congressional Compliments** – Four representatives commented on the importance of short lines during a June 14 hearing on freight rail safety. Please see “House Members Press FRA Administrator” in the Legislative section below to read about what they said.



## ASLRRRA Submits Comments for House Hearing on Freight Rail Safety Attended by Staff

ASLRRRA President Chuck Baker did not testify at Tuesday's House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee rail subcommittee's "Examining Freight Rail Safety" hearing, but the Association did [submit comments](#) for the record to committee members.



The comments outline the many ways ASLRRRA supports safety in the short line freight rail industry, and highlight regulations that, if enacted, would help the industry to continue to improve safety.

Baker and other ASLRRRA staff members also attended the hearing in person to monitor discussions, especially as they pertained to short line railroads.

For more information about short line issues discussed during the hearing, please see the article “House Members Press FRA Administrator” in the Legislative section below.

*Federal Railroad Administrator Amit Bose testifies during the House Transportation and Infrastructure hearing on freight rail safety. ASLRRRA President Chuck Baker attended the hearing but did not testify. Instead, ASLRRRA submitted written comments for the record.*

## Meet ASLRRRA's New Board of Directors Vice Chair Matt Walsh



Genesee & Wyoming Inc. Executive Vice President of Corporate Development Matt Walsh is the new vice chair of ASLRRRA's Board of Directors. ASLRRRA's Amy Krouse reached out to Walsh to learn more about his career, his thoughts about the railroad industry and his goals for ASLRRRA.

Walsh joined Genesee & Wyoming in September 2001 and currently serves as its executive vice president of corporate development, working from G&W's offices in Connecticut and commuting there via Metro-North from his home in New York.

Before joining the rail industry, Walsh was an investment banker in New York and London. Walsh has served on the Executive Committee of ASLRRRA's Board of Directors since 2011, with a short two-year hiatus when G&W sent him to the UK. He also previously served on the Board of the Railroad Clearinghouse.

A graduate of Princeton University, Walsh and his wife, Kate, have four children and a dog and when not traveling to visit G&W operations or for ASLRRRA events, spends his time watching high school sports and dramatic performances.

*AK: What made you get involved, and has kept you involved, with ASLRRRA?*

MW: I initially got involved in the ASLRRRA the same way many do – someone put their hand on my shoulder and asked! What has kept me involved since I first joined the Executive Committee is the unwavering faith and commitment the membership of ASLRRRA has in their industry and the need to continue to promote and advance the narrative of the key and differentiated role short lines play in the American economy.

*AK: What got you into railroading?*

MW: G&W was a client of one of the financial institutions I worked for many years ago. I was familiar with the company and its CEO at the time, Mort Fuller, who had a terrific reputation. When one of my colleagues, Jack Hellmann, was hired as G&W's CFO, he asked me to join him and help grow the company. I thought I would stay for two years and move on to something else. That was more than 21 years ago!

*AK: What is the biggest value for joining/participating in ASLRRRA?*

MW: ASLRRRA punches so far above its weight in what it is able to accomplish. I can't imagine there is another industry association that comes close. ASLRRRA offers so much to its membership – industry advocacy, education programs, regulatory advice, communication tools, access to suppliers and service providers, just to name a few, and has a great emphasis on serving those short lines with the least amount of resources.

The staff of ASLRRRA works hard to both promote and protect short lines, particularly important in a time of increased regulatory activity, as well as to advocate for programs and regulation that proactively work to help short lines grow. The story of our industry is a tremendously positive one and ASLRRRA does a great job conveying that to all stakeholders.

*AK: How have you seen the industry change since you became involved in it?*

MW: The attention to safety and corresponding performance has been transformational. We all realize that as a group all the short lines are in this together and we are all only as good as our weakest operator. It is now accepted practice and belief that short lines can be and should be every bit as safe as any Class I, and, if not, there are people and resources there to help – including from the incredibly

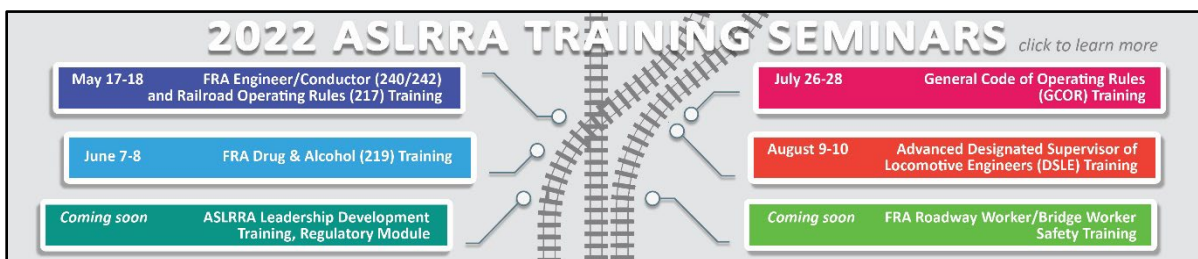
successful Short Line Safety Institute. Short lines of all sizes have done a terrific job over the last several decades, in many instances transforming what were under-invested and under-served rail lines into well-capitalized, dynamic, local growth engines, operating on upgraded infrastructure and as a dependable and trusted partner to a growing customer base.

AK: As you take up the leadership mantle – what will be your personal mission/goals/ideas that you'd like to see the Association move toward?

MW: I have been around the Executive Committee of the board longer than anyone else at this point and have worked and served with great people. I want to make sure that the ASLRRA has a long-term strategic plan in place that ensures it has the right resources in place to achieve its goals, allowing the organization to continue to succeed well into the future with a stable financial footing and a clear mandate. Most importantly, the ASLRRA needs to be in position to mirror the behavior of its members – set big goals, be flexible and responsive and follow through.

AK: What's your superpower?

MW: Great question. I eat a lot of potato chips!



### FRA Announces Grant Funding for Trespassing, Suicide Prevention

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) [announced recipients](#) of grant awards to help prevent rail trespassing and suicide. Almost \$2 million will go to Railroad Trespassing Enforcement Grants, and \$207,000 to Railroad Trespassing Suicide Prevention Grants.

The funding announcement marks a significant boost in award amounts and is the largest single funding announcement made in conjunction with the FRA's [National Strategy to Reduce](#)

#### [Trespassing.](#)

Some of the funds will go to paying the wages of law enforcement officials to help enforce trespassing violations. Other grants will help train professionals to identify and respond to crisis situations.

Several ASLRRA members will benefit from the FRA grants, including Florida East Coast Railway, Brightline, Pan Am Railways, Montana Rail Link, Providence and Worcester Railroad, Massachusetts Coastal Railroad, Knoxville and Holston River Railroad and Stillwater Central Railroad.



## House Members Press FRA Administrator on Short Line Issues at Hearing

On Tuesday, the rail subcommittee of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee held a hearing titled "[Examining Freight Rail Safety](#)." The hearing included testimony from government and stakeholder witnesses, including Federal Railroad Administrator Amit Bose and ASLRRRA member Loram Technologies Vice President of Sales and Business Development Nathan Bachman. Witnesses testified about the current state of freight rail safety, on topics like Automated Track Inspection (ATI), crew size, fatigue, long trains and workforce issues.

In all, four committee members directly mentioned short lines and their importance to their district and the national economy.

Rep. Tim Burchett (R-Tenn.) stressed the importance of the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) grant program to short line freight rail infrastructure, noting the recent awards to 24 short lines earlier this month. He urged the administration to advocate for increased CRISI funding as Congress debates the Fiscal Year 2023 spending bill, noting how the administration sought less for Fiscal Year 2023 than Congress provided in Fiscal Year 2022 and less than the recent infrastructure law allows.

Rep. Pete Stauber (R-Minn.) noted the 24 CRISI awards and how CRISI helps advance safety and makes the network more efficient and sought a "continued commitment" from Bose on CRISI for short lines.

Bose responded, "Short lines play such an important role in the railroad network that we have, and we want to do everything possible to make sure that they are robust and have the funding to make the improvements that they need...the CRISI program is such a great tool to do that." Bose noted how CRISI helps short lines upgrade track to accommodate 286K-lb cars and make grade crossings safer.

Rep. Jake Auchincloss (D-Mass.) stressed the tremendous value of CRISI and importance of short lines in Massachusetts, and he noted the industry's outstanding \$12 billion need for investments to modernize. Auchincloss secured a commitment from Bose to using CRISI to help invest in short lines, and the two discussed specifically how CRISI helps short lines improve efficiency of the supply chain, make track upgrades, rebuild bridges and replace ties. With CRISI and short lines, Bose noted, short lines may have limited resources, that "relatively small grants make a huge difference...funding goes a lot further."

Finally, Rep. Bruce Westerman (R-Ark.) closed out the first panel pressing Bose on how a crew size mandate could be harmful for small business short line freight railroads, noting how he proudly represents more short line freight railroads than any other member of Congress. He noted railroads would be forced to spend money on an "unnecessary workforce expansion" instead of investing in infrastructure. He also urged the administration to seek more resources for CRISI, like Burchett, as the administration's budget request is essentially a budget cut for a program that is necessary and effective.

In addition, several other members like Rep. Westerman pressed Bose on problems with mandating crew size for railroads. Administrator Bose largely deflected and pointed to the upcoming draft rule.

## Biden Will Sign Ocean Reform Shipping Act to Help Ease Shipping Challenges


On Thursday President Joe Biden will sign the [bipartisan Ocean Shipping Reform Act](#) (S. 3580), which will crack down on rising ocean shipping costs and help ease supply chain backlogs.

In part, the bill will give more authority to the Federal Maritime Commission (FMC), which is responsible for protecting the interests of U.S. businesses relying on ocean transportation under the Shipping Act, which was last amended in 1998. The FMC will now have more effective oversight of international ocean carriers.

Although the Ocean Shipping Reform Act largely affects ocean transportation, ASLRRRA's government affairs and regulatory teams, along with representatives from the Association of American Railroads (AAR), worked on behalf of the freight rail industry to prevent inclusion of provisions that could have set a dangerous precedent for other rail-related regulatory action.

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## ASLRRRA Announcements

### Joint Committee Meeting Takes Place in August in Boston

ASLRRRA's [Joint Committee Meeting](#) offers ASLRRRA members on the Association's constituent committees a chance to gather and discuss important issues affecting the short line railroad industry.

This year's Joint Committee Meeting takes place in Boston, Massachusetts on Aug. 2 and 3. MassRobotics will host the first day of events in the company's Boston office. Click [here](#) to view meeting details, or [here](#) to register for the event.

### Sign up for ASLRRRA's Summer Training Seminars Before Space Runs Out

Space is limited in ASLRRRA's summer training seminars, so those interested in signing up for training in the General Code of Operating Rules or Advanced Designated Supervisor of Locomotive Engineers should register soon.

ASLRRRA has again partnered with the Iowa Northern Railway Company (IANR) to offer comprehensive training on [General Code of Operating Rules \(GCOR\)](#). The three-day [GCOR](#) seminar will be held July 26-28 and completing this training allows railroads using GCOR as their operating rules to meet training requirements mandated by 49 CFR Part 240, 242 and 214 Subpart C.

**June 15, 2022**

This seminar will be presented by subject matter experts JR Gelnar, ASLRRRA's vice president of safety and compliance, and Mark Vaughn, IANR's assistant general manager. It will be held at the BienVenu Event Center adjacent to the Holiday Inn & Suites in Cedar Falls, Iowa. Click [here](#) to register.

ASLRRRA and IANR will also present [Advanced Designated Supervisor of Locomotive Engineers \(DSLE\) Training](#) on August 9-10, also in Cedar Falls. Gelnar and Vaughn will instruct participants on DSLE responsibilities, including application and administration of 49 CFR Part 240 and Part 242 similarities and differences. Click [here](#) to register for DSLE training.

### **Plan to Attend Regional Meetings, General Counsel Symposium and Finance and Administration Seminar**

ASLRRRA's [regional meetings](#) will take place in the fall, with the General Counsel Symposium and Finance and Administration Seminar to be held in conjunction with the Central and Pacific Region Meeting.

The Eastern and Southern Region Meeting will take place Sept. 26 to 28 in Atlanta, Georgia, while the Central and Pacific Region Meeting will take place Oct. 25 to 27 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The symposium and seminar will also be held Oct. 25 to 27. Registration for regional meetings will open soon.

### **Preferred Provider ORR Safety Has Equipment to Protect Workers from Heat Hazards**

Heat waves are afflicting much of the continental United States, a potentially deadly situation for outdoor workers like many railroad employees. Preferred Provider ORR Safety offers products and services that can help ASLRRRA members keep their employees safe during extreme summer weather.

Through ASLRRRA's Member Discount Program, members benefit from exceptional, personalized service and discounted pricing on a large assortment of products and equipment needed to implement an effective and efficient safety program. ORR's product line includes foot and leg protection, signs, ergonomic products, hearing protection, clothing protection, eye protection, lighting and electrical products, hand protection, respiratory protection, storage containment and environmental spill cleanup, traffic control, head protection and much more.

As an ISO-9001-registered distributor of personal protective equipment (PPE) and related services to the industrial market, ORR Safety has provided products and services for more than 70 years to over 20,000 companies, helping to protect hundreds of thousands of workers. And with more than 40 years of railroad-specific experience, ORR is a trusted partner with a long history of working with railroads and suppliers to provide innovative solutions to many of the unique challenges inherent in this complex and demanding industry.

Visit ASLRRRA's [Member Discount Program](#) website and click on the ORR Safety logo to learn more about their complete line of safety products and equipment, and start saving today.

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## ASLRRA Out and About



### Baker Visits Canton Railroad, B&O Railroad Museum

ASLRRA President Chuck Baker visited Maryland on Monday. Canton Railroad CEO John Magness took Baker on a tour of the company's Baltimore office, and the two also visited the B&O Railroad Museum, where Magness is a board member.

Museum Executive Director Kris Hoellen talked with Magness and Baker about plans to celebrate the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of railroading in the U.S., which will be celebrated in 2027. The B&O Railroad Museum is in the initial planning process for that landmark occasion.

*ASLRRA President Chuck Baker (right) posed for a picture with B&O Railroad Museum Executive Director Kris Hoellen during a tour of the museum.*



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## ASLRRA Webinars – Live or On-Demand

### Upcoming Webinars

[FRA's CRISI Grant Program: Preparing for FY '22 Funding Round – June 21, 2022](#)

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) is likely to release the Fiscal Year 2022 CRISI grant funding notice as soon as this August.

Kevin Keller, vice president and senior professional associate at HDR, Inc., and Eileen Reilly, CEO of Global Train Services (GTS), will join ASLRRA's Tom Lynch and Zach Radford to talk about how to be

ready for the next round of CRISI funding, which at about \$1.3 billion will be significantly more than before.

The webinar is free for members and \$25 for non-members.

### **Access Business Development Webinars in ASLRRRA's On-Demand Library**

Webinars in ASLRRRA's [On-Demand Webinar Library](#) explore topics related to building and managing business effectively. Search the Marketing and Business Development category for titles like:

- Short Line Business Development, Growth, and Marketing Panel
- How Short Lines are Adapting Workplaces & Serving Customers [During the Pandemic]
- Using Social Media as a Business Development Tool

These webinars are only a few of the over 170 recordings available on a wide variety of topics including finance, human resources, communications and technology. ASLRRRA members can access the On-Demand Webinar for free while non-members can purchase a subscription. [Click here](#) to access the webinar library today.

Click [here](#) to learn more about ASLRRRA's education offerings.

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## **Industry Events and Announcements**

### **League of Railway Women Accepting Scholarship Applications**

The League of Railway Women (LRW) is currently [accepting applications](#) for its Connie Sumara Memorial Scholarship and its Future of Railroading Scholarship. Submissions for both are due July 2.

The Connie Sumara Scholarship, established in memory of former LRW President Connie Sumara, awards \$3,000 to a woman pursuing a graduate or undergraduate degree who is also looking to further a rail industry career.

The Future of Railroading Scholarship awards \$2,000 to a student pursuing a graduate or undergraduate degree who is also interested in supporting the rail industry.

ASLRRRA's Crystal Gitchell is the LRW scholarship chair. [Click here](#) for more information about the scholarships and to find a scholarship application.

Click [here](#) for a calendar of industry events.