



## American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association

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### **Railroad Subcommittee Chair Donald Payne, Jr. Meets with Short Line Railroads**

*Zoom Call Allows Payne to Hear Varied Experiences from Multiple ASLRRRA- member Short Lines*

**WASHINGTON, February 18, 2021** – Leaders of three railroad members of the American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association (ASLRRRA) met with Representative Donald J. Payne, Jr. (D-NJ, 10<sup>th</sup>), the new Chairman of the powerful U. S. House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure's Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines and Hazardous Materials via Zoom. The railroads shared their response to the COVID-19 pandemic and hoped-for economic recovery, including the various ways railroads adjusted operations to comply with Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommendations while serving customers as part of the nation's critical infrastructure. The meeting also gave Chairman Payne the opportunity to better understand the environmental benefits of rail and the priorities of small business freight railroads in future transportation reauthorization bills.

“While there are many aspects of Congressional business that have been difficult to address during the COVID-19 pandemic, we are encouraged that access to provide firsthand knowledge transfer on issues of importance to our industry has not been one of them,” said Tom Lynch, Vice President of Government Affairs, ASLRRRA. “Chairman Payne and his staff heard from railroads regarding the business challenges short lines face, the economic impact of rail service in their communities, and the innovative ways they

are using technology to drive improvements in safety and reduce environmental impact. These direct conversations allow for better decisions from the committees of jurisdiction and help to avoid unintended consequences of lawmaking.”

Participants in the meeting included: Nathan Fenno, President, New York Susquehanna & Western Railroad, Elizabeth Barnhart, Deputy Corporate Secretary & Corporate Compliance Officer, Conrail, Ryan Hill, Chief Engineer – Design & Construction, Conrail, and John McCreavy, Director, Business Development, SMS Rail Service, Inc. and President, New Jersey Railroad Association. Joining the meeting were Crystal Gitchell, Assistant Vice President, Legislative and Regulatory Policy, and Tom Lynch, Vice President, Government Affairs, both of ASLRRRA.

“ASLRRRA member participation is critical to the success of these meetings, and we are sincerely grateful for their continued willingness to provide perspective on industry realities,” said Lynch.

Congressman Payne’s 10<sup>th</sup> District in New Jersey provides a gateway to New York, straddling a critical transportation corridor that includes Newark Airport, Port Newark-Elizabeth Marine Terminal, portions of freight and passenger rail’s Northeast Corridor, and I-95. Payne has been a champion of transportation initiatives including the Moving Forward Act, Gateway Projects benefitting public and private rail and emergency funding for transit during the COVID-19 pandemic. Payne was also a co-sponsor of the BRACE Act, that called for permanence of the Short Line Tax Credit (45G), which has enabled more than \$5B in private investment in short line freight rail since its inception in 2005. The credit was made permanent as part of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021.

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**About ASLRRRA** - The American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association (ASLRRRA) is a non-profit trade association representing the interests of the nation’s 600 short line and regional railroads and railroad supply company members in legislative and regulatory matters. Short lines operate 47,500 miles of track in 49 states, or approximately 29% of the national railroad network, touching in origination or termination one out of every five cars moving on the national railroad system, serving customers who otherwise would be cut off from the national railroad network. [www.aslrra.org](http://www.aslrra.org)