



June 9, 2021



ASLRRRA Comments on INVEST in America Act, a “Mixed Bag” for Short Line Railroads

ASLRRRA issued a statement in response to the introduction of the "Investing in a New Vision for the Environment and Surface Transportation in America Act" or the "[INVEST in America Act](#)."

"We recognize the need for a large and transformational infrastructure investment to support the American economy and protect our environment long into the future, and believe there is an opportunity right now to accomplish this long-held bipartisan goal. We welcome the introduction of the INVEST in America Act by the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee as an important step in this process," said ASLRRRA President Chuck Baker. "For small business freight railroads, the bill is a mixed bag. There are some beneficial funding opportunities, including an expanded CRISI grant program, but there are also a host of troubling and unnecessary operational mandates and multiple missed funding opportunities where short lines could help achieve the goals of a program, but are not included as eligible recipients. As this process advances, we urge both parties, both sides of the Capitol, and both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue to work together to produce a successful bipartisan surface transportation reauthorization bill, and we stand ready to work in good faith to help accomplish that goal. Short line railroads are eager to be a part of the solution for America."

The bill was introduced by Representative Peter DeFazio (D-Ore.), Chair of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC), Chair of the Subcommittee on Highways and Transit and Donald M. Payne, Jr. (D-N.J.), Chair of the Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines and Hazardous Materials on June 4.

ASLRRRA staff is tracking several areas that will affect short line railroads - any significant changes to truck sizes and weights standards, changes to CRISI grant program (funding, eligibility, and carve-outs), authorization under law for the Short Line Safety Institute, the crew size mandate with only limited short line exemptions, prohibitive LNG by rail car language, and blocked crossings provisions to name a few.

The committee began marking up the bill at 10 a.m. today.

Central and Pacific Region Meeting Wraps Up Today

The Central & Pacific Region Meetings will conclude today with a golf outing and a visit to the Short Line Safety Institute Safety Train. More than 300 attendees joined us in Kansas City, Mo. for two days of outstanding education and other programming.

On Tuesday evening a special election was held for the Central Region. Kristin Bevil, general counsel at Pioneer Lines, was elected as vice president, Central Region of ASLRRRA's Board of Directors, replacing Barry McClure, executive vice president of Ironhorse Resources, Inc.

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ASLRRA wishes to thank McClure for his MANY contributions, in addition to his past six years of service on the Executive Board, McClure's participation includes:

- LPC Committee Member since 2008
- ASLRRA Board Member since 2010
- Central Region VP since 2015
- Member of the HR Committee since 2015
- Member of F&A Committee since 2016, served as Acting Chair 2019 -2020

Newly Added! Norfolk Southern Executive to Speak at ASLRRA's Eastern and Southern Region Meeting

Darrell Wilson, assistant vice president at Norfolk Southern Corporation, has been added to the roster of speakers at this year's [Eastern and Southern Region Meeting](#), held June 21 to 23 in Louisville, Ky.

Wilson will give a Class I update during the Wednesday general session, talking about the road ahead for rail. He is the second Class I representative to participate in the meeting. CSX Transportation's Tom Tisa, head of business development, will give an industry update during the meeting's Tuesday general session.

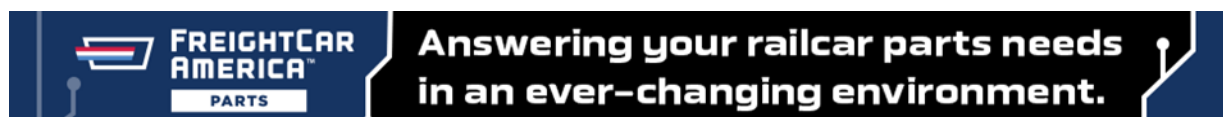
Registration is still open for both the Eastern and Southern Region Meeting and the [General Counsel Symposium](#), which will be held in conjunction with the regional meeting. Participants will have the opportunity to hear from a number of people in the industry, including fellow railroad executives, shippers, and federal agency representatives.

Several ASLRRA committees will gather during the regional meeting, including the Legislative Policy Committee (LPC), General Counsel Committee and Small Railroad Committee. The Young Professionals Committee will have a social gathering on June 21 at 4pm.

Attendance at the Small Railroad Committee is open to railroad members who are small or independent railroads and are not part of a holding company. ASLRRA is welcoming Small Railroad Committee members, who participate in calls and meetings and work collaboratively to identify needs and services to support small and independent railroads throughout the industry.

Interested individuals should email [Sabrina Waiss](#) to be added to the committee list and receive meeting details. Please contact [Sabrina Waiss](#) or Chair [Dan Sabin](#) with any additional questions about committee membership.

The Eastern and Southern Region Meeting will also feature networking opportunities and social events like a [golf tournament](#). And the Short Line Safety Institute (SLSI) will bring its [Safety Train](#), allowing attendees to tour the train and meet with SLSI representatives to learn about the no-cost resources available to short line railroads.





ASLRRRA Submits Comments to DOT Regarding Executive Orders, and to State of Washington Regarding Crew Size Rules

[On June 4](#), ASLRRRA and the Association of American Railroads (AAR) filed supportive comments in response to the U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT) notification of regulatory review regarding the consistency of existing regulations and other agency actions with the policies and objectives set forth in Executive Orders (EO) 13990 and 13992.

The associations highlighted two recent rulemaking proceedings undertaken by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) that directly support climate and environmental objectives described in EOs 13990 and 13992. ASLRRRA and AAR believe these rulemakings, the "Brakes I" final rule and eABS notice of proposed rulemaking, serve as examples of how regulatory modernization that facilitates greater efficiency can also deliver improvements in safety and environmental impact.

[On June 7](#), ASLRRRA submitted comments to Washington state's Utilities and Transportation Commission in response to a rulemaking by the commission to implement House Bill (HB) 1841, Chapter 170 of the Laws of 2020, at WAC 480-62-255, "Minimum Crew Size on Certain Trains."

ASLRRRA previously provided comments on Sept. 4, 2020 and Dec. 18, 2020 in this proceeding. Unfortunately, the proposed regulations at WAC 480-62-255 suffer from the same deficiencies as HB 1841. Specifically, the text is preempted by the ICC Termination Act (ICCTA) and provides a disincentive to short line railroads to upgrade their infrastructure.

RRB Will Send Statements of Service to Railroad Employees in June

Eligible railroad employees should expect to receive Form BA-1, the Certificate of Service Months and Compensation, from the Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) by the end of June. The form gives employees a report of their creditable railroad compensation in the previous calendar year.

The information in the report helps determine whether an employee qualifies for benefits and the amount of those benefits. The RRB encourages employees to review their Form BA-1 to ensure it matches their own records. Those who have not received their forms by July 1 should contact the RRB field office.

The RRB offers more information about the form, including a summary of all the information it contains, in a recent [press release](#).

AAR RAN Message and White House Memo Urge Companies to Protect Themselves from Cyber Attacks

For its members, ASLRRRA has posted the most recent Railway Alert Network (RAN) Cybersecurity Awareness Message from the Association of American Railroads (AAR) on its website. The RAN message concerns a memo from Anne Neuberger, deputy assistant to the president and deputy national security advisor for cyber and emerging technology, urging private sector companies to take steps to protect themselves from cyber attacks.

The White House memo comes in light of recent high-profile attacks on companies like Colonial Pipeline and JBS USA. It says private organizations have a "critical responsibility" to take protective measures, because no company is immune to the threat of ransomware. Included in the memo are recommendations for steps companies can take immediately to mitigate the threat of a cyber attack.

ASLRRA members can access the AAR message and the White House memo [here](#).



Tenn. Representative Visits ASLRRA Member to Learn About Rail

Tennessee Representative John Rose [visited](#) ASLRRA member R. J. Corman's Nashville and Eastern Line (NERR) on May 25, a tour that came about as a result of conversations held during this year's virtual Railroad Day on Capitol Hill event.



Rose was joined by District Director Rebecca Foster and Deputy District Director Ray Render during the visit, which included representatives from R. J. Corman and the general manager of Kenwal Steel, one of NERR's customers.

During the visit, Rose learned about R. J. Corman and its Tennessee operations, the importance of rail and related industries to the region, and current issues affecting the short line industry.

Visits with lawmakers are a great way to build relationships and demonstrate the important contributions of rail to the local and national economy. Railroad Day on Capitol Hill offers a chance for companies to connect with representatives, and ASLRRA encourages its members to foster connections made at the April event. Members needing assistance in these efforts can contact ASLRRA's [Tom Lynch](#) or [Zach Radford](#).

ASLRRA Signs Letter Supporting Bill to Recruit Transportation Workers

ASLRRA signed a [letter](#) to U.S. House and Senate leaders backing H.R. 3310 and S. 1681, the Promoting Service in Transportation Act.

In signing the letter, ASLRRA joined over 30 organizations representing rail, aviation, trucking and maritime interests in support of the proposed legislation, which allows the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) to develop public service announcements encouraging careers in transportation.

The goal of this public outreach would also be to promote diversity in the transportation sector. As noted in the letter, several industries face challenges in this area. Women are underrepresented in the

trucking industry and in aviation, and minority groups make up less than 10 percent of all pilots, men and women. In the maritime industry the challenge is age, as the average worker is 54 years old.



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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 Pleased to Welcome Three Short Lines and One Switching Operation to Our Membership Rolls



BG & CM Railroad, which operates over 166 miles of track in Idaho. BGCM commodities hauled include food & fuel and forest products.



Ozark Valley Railroad, which operates over 27 miles of track in Missouri. OVRR commodities hauled include brick & cement, metallic ores & minerals, steel & scrap.



St. Maries River Railroad, which operates over 86 miles of track in northern Idaho. STMA largely hauls forest products.

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All three short lines are owned by [Midwest Pacific Rail Net & Logistics](#), a Kansas City-based railroad holding company that also offers rail construction, rail car repair, transload services, real estate, industrial development, switching, MOW repair/manufacturing, and consulting services.



Top Rail Switching LLC, based in Pittsburg, Kan., provides switching services in Louisiana, and related services across the U.S. and Canada. It is a subsidiary of [Top Rail Solutions](#), a leading railroad solutions company providing a comprehensive, personalized transportation strategy for your business. Your primary contact is CEO [Kellie Bartley](#), ext. 700. Many thanks to Shea McLaughlin from CDL Electric for the assist with this new membership.



VENTURA COUNTY RAILWAY COMPANY LLC

RFP: Operate Freight Rail Service and Maintain Port-Owned Rail Infrastructure at the Port of Hueneme/Oxnard Harbor District/May 17, 2021.

Proposals due July 17. www.portofh.org/rfp

ASLRRA Announcements

Interns Join ASLRRA for Eight-Week Program Through The Fund for American Studies Program



Angrilla



Ellis

ASLRRA welcomes two interns to its offices this summer, John Angrilla and Corinne Ellis. They will be helping ASLRRA's team provide services to members in the legislative, policy, and communications arenas and will have an opportunity to join members of staff in meetings with Congress.

Both come to ASLRRA via [The Fund for American Studies \(TFAS\)](#) program, which connects students with internship opportunities in the Washington, D.C. area.

Angrilla is a senior at Shaw University majoring in political science with a minor in business administration and management. The North Carolina native is also a member

of the Shaw soccer team. He is participating in the TFAS Leadership + The American Presidency program track.

Ellis, of Pennsylvania, is a senior at Penn State University. She is majoring in corporate communications with a focus on pre-law and is involved in the Business + Government Relations program track for TFAS.

Get Help Applying for Grant Programs with ASLRRA's Preferred Providers

ASLRRA has tapped industry experts to assist member railroads in the preparation and submission of grant applications for programs currently available from the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), and other sources.

ASLRRA's preferred providers for grant writing services include Bergmann, HDR, Inc. and Global Train Services (GTS), and all three companies offer discounted rates, industry expertise, and exceptional service to ASLRRA members.

Visit the Association's [Member Discount Program page](#) to learn more about these exceptional preferred providers.

Save Money with ASLRRA's Member Discount Program Partners

The image displays a collection of logos for ASLRRA's Member Discount Program Partners. The logos are arranged in two rows. The top row includes aE, BERGMANN ARCHITECTS ENGINEERS PLANNERS, Elavon | usbank, GTS, and HDR. The bottom row includes HUB, LORAM, McGRIFF, SEIBELS & WILLIAMS, INC., and ORR Safety.



ASLRRRA Webinars – Live or On-Demand

Upcoming Webinars

[Employee Retention Credit](#) – June 29, 2021

In this webinar, Nicole Teska and Chelsea Sweet of Bowers and Company CPAs will explain how Employee Retention Credit rules have changed in 2021. They will discuss how to determine eligibility, how much the credit can be worth and how to claim the credit. Also,

Teska and Sweet will discuss how those who have not yet analyzed their credit for 2020 can still file an amended return.

Sponsored by:



Find Information on Important Financial Issues in ASLRRRA's On-Demand Webinar Library

ASLRRRA's [On-Demand Webinar Library](#) includes recordings that address important railroad industry communications and reporting systems topics. Find the following titles in the Safety and Operations category:

- What's New Regarding Confidential Close Call Report System?
- Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) 101 – Railroad Communications
- Emergency Notification Systems (ENS) Review

In addition to these offerings, ASLRRRA has more than 100 webinar recordings in its [On-Demand Webinar Library](#). Recordings are free to members and available by subscription to non-members.

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

Industry Events and Announcements

June 15 and June 16: Next Railinc Umler Webinars Meant for Company Administrators

The next two Umler webinars from Railinc are geared toward helping company administrators understand and use the Umler application.

The webinars, which are intended primarily for new administrators, will, among other things, help users manage and approve Umler permission requests; grant equipment rights, inspection rights and pool rights; and review enhanced process for transferring ownership.

Registration is free but required for these webinars. Click [here](#) to register for the June 15 webinar, or [here](#) for the June 16 webinar.

July 14-15: Operation Lifesaver Will Hold Virtual Leadership Conference

Operation Lifesaver's Leadership Conference will be held online this year, July 14 to 15. The conference feature panel sessions discussing safety partnerships and talks from U.S. Department of Transportation officials.

ASLRRA's Jo Strang, who is the chair of Operation Lifesaver's board, will provide introductory remarks before a discussion with Union Pacific Railroad CEO Lance Fritz.

This event is free for participants, but registration is required and space is limited. Follow [this link](#) to learn more and to register.

New Short Line Safety Institute Safety Tips Discuss HazMat Documents and Fouled Tracks

Two new safety tips are now available from the Short Line Safety Institute (SLSI) on their [website](#), a hazardous materials (hazmat) tip and a discussion of fouled tracks.

The [hazardous materials safety tip](#) is the third and last in a series of hazmat tips. It talks about position-in-train documents, which list the current position of each hazmat shipment in a train. The tip also lists other requirements for position-in-train documents, including information they must include and when they need to be updated.

The other safety tip concerns [protection when tracks are fouled](#), a crucial point given roughly 59 percent of roadway worker fatalities in the past decade have resulted from collisions with on-track equipment, highway vehicles or roadway maintenance machines. This tip offers some basic guidance on mandatory steps roadway workers need to take when they are required to foul a track or tracks.

Safety Tips are just a few of the many online resources available at no cost to railroads. Visit the SLSI [website](#) to learn more, and watch videos highlighting each of the innovative programs developed by SLSI's experienced team.

Port of Corpus Christi Authority to Issue RFP for Short Line Operator at the Port

The Port of Corpus Christi Authority (PCCA) will issue a request for proposal (RFP) [seeking](#) a short line railroad operator at the Port of Corpus Christi in Texas. The Port of Corpus Christi is the third-largest U.S. port by tonnage, and railcar volume through the port in the last 12 months exceeded 50,000 carloads.

Bluejay Advisors will lead the process and help select an operator, with plans for a contract to start in August 2022. Interested companies should register as a vendor through the Port's Procurement website at this [link](#).

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

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