



American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association

50 F Street, NW
Suite 500
Washington, DC 20001
aslrra@aslrra.org
www.aslrra.org

Contact:

Amy Krouse

akrouse@aslrra.org

(Cell) 312-371-6947

(Direct) 202-585-3438

Short Line Advocacy Day Brings Railroads to Washington During Infrastructure Week

WASHINGTON – May 16, 2023 – On May 17, 2023, short line railroad industry representatives will visit 176 Congressional offices to personally voice their concerns and share their views with their elected officials. More than 150 individuals from Class II and III railroads, suppliers, and supporting association staff members will be in Washington, DC to tell their story. This year’s Infrastructure Week is May 16 – May 20 - dozens of organizations will be hosting and organizing scores of events to celebrate.

“The association advocates for short lines every day in Washington, but nothing beats our small railroad members coming into town to personally explain how Congressional action impacts their critical contributions to the U.S. freight rail industry and the greater supply chain,” said Chuck Baker, President of the American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association, which represents the industry’s 600 short lines and their suppliers. “This year, in the face of six bills being considered in Congress addressing rail safety, it is more critical than ever that our members come to Washington to share their unique American success story. We will urge Congress to wield their pens with precision to create a regulatory environment that allows us to remain nimble enough to provide cost-efficient service to our customers,

address safety concerns, and contribute as the critical connector to freight rail service for thousands of customers across the country – particularly in rural and small-town America.”

This year, the industry will call upon Congress to:

- **Craft Legislation Carefully to Address Specific Safety Issues**, avoiding mandates that do not provide a proven safety benefit and that would risk diverting finite resources away from efforts such as upgrading railroad track, or worse, would risk shifting freight from rail onto public roadways, putting short lines out of business, and hurting shippers and local economies.
- **Support Funding for the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) program**, which is the Federal Railroad Administration’s most popular and over-subscribed grant program. Since 2017, more than \$1.5B in CRISI funds have been invested, helping build a world-class, sustainable network for freight rail. Short lines in 47 of 50 states and hundreds of shippers have directly benefited from the CRISI program.
- **Support funding for the Short Line Safety Institute (SLSI)**, which improves safety culture awareness and practices for small railroads. Thanks to federal funding, SLSI provides training at no cost to railroads, including leadership and hazmat training.
- **Oppose all efforts to increase truck length or weight limits, including any pilot programs.** Congress should reject these measures because bigger and heavier trucks will shift freight from rail to trucks, increasing hazards to the driving public, increasing the costs of road maintenance, and causing a negative impact on the environment. Bigger and heavier trucks increase road congestion and lead to a higher crash risk. In addition, moving freight by truck instead of rail increases greenhouse gas emissions by up to 75%, reversing the environmental benefits of rail transportation.
- **Support Disaster Relief for Short Line Railroads.** With the rate of natural disasters like hurricanes, wildfires, earthquakes and floods increasing, Congress should ensure small railroads

have the necessary resources after catastrophic natural disasters to help rebuild, instead of being forced to end operations, abandon customers, and disrupt the supply chain.

“Each meeting is an opportunity to illuminate the state and district-level impacts of legislative actions that affect short line railroads, the thousands of customers they serve, and the economic value add we provide to the small communities we operate in,” continued Baker. “In the weeks ahead, there will be important conversations on the path forward on the Railway Safety Act in the Senate, and other similar bills in the House of Representatives. These meetings offer Members of Congress and their staff an opportunity to better understand the levers that drive or hinder the success of the small freight railroad industry and its important contributions to U.S. supply chain resilience and fluidity.”

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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