



American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association

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Kristin Bevil Testifies to Importance of Federal Rail Assistance to Short Line Industry at House T & I Subcommittee Hearing

Bevil calls out CRISI as key federal grant program for short line growth

WASHINGTON, May 6, 2025 – Today Kristin Bevil, General Counsel and Chief Legal Officer, Pinsly Railroad and Executive Board Member of the American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association (ASLRRA), testified before the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure’s Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials in a hearing titled [America Builds: Improving the Efficiency and Effectiveness of Federal Rail Assistance](#).

Representing the short line industry perspective, Ms. Bevil detailed the transformative impact to rail safety and efficiency for customers that has been made possible by the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) program, noting that CRISI is the only federal rail infrastructure grant program that short line railroads are directly eligible for. Since the program was enacted, some 240 CRISI grants have been awarded that benefited short lines, totaling over \$2.7 billion.

“Our industry is one of entrepreneurial grit. Short lines routinely reinvest up to a third of their revenues into infrastructure maintenance and upgrades—far more than most other industries. As an example, Pinsly Railroad has invested over \$25 million annually into our infrastructure for routine maintenance – and that does not include major infrastructure projects, many of which

could not be accomplished with regular annual revenue. This is where the *Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements* (CRISI) program, a vital federal rail grant program, becomes essential,” said Kristin Bevil, Pinsly Railroad.

Although short line railroads invest up to 1/3 of their revenues in maintenance, a \$12 Billion backlog of upgrades exists to bring short line rail and bridges to modern standards. CRISI leverages private funds to tackle projects that will be true game-changers for customers, and regional economies – particularly in small town and rural America. The CRISI program delivers six core benefits – addressing critical infrastructure needs, improving safety, creating and sustaining jobs, enhancing environmental outcomes, promoting rural development and improving service for customers.

The Pinsly Railroad Company has received four CRISI grants in various cycles. Ms. Bevil detailed both the beneficial results and the challenges in executing the projects, providing a number of process changes that should be considered as Congress considers a reauthorization of the Surface Transportation Bill.

“The CRISI program has proven to be powerful, effective, and broadly supported on a bipartisan basis. However, as demonstrated by the experience of the Pinsly Railroad, there are clear opportunities to improve the grant process. Delays between award announcements and actual construction, as well as obstacles to making necessary project adjustments as conditions evolve, significantly reduce the effectiveness of CRISI funding — not just for railroads like ours, but for the shippers and communities that rely on us,” stated Ms. Bevil.

Ms. Bevil also urged Congress to preserve CRISI’s advanced appropriations structure. Without it, federal investment becomes less effective, fewer projects move forward, and the communities that rely on short lines are left behind.

Other federal rail assistance programs that the short line industry has made good use of, and supports continued robust investment in, were noted in testimony, including Operation Lifesaver

(OLI), Section 130, and the Rail Crossing Elimination (RCE) program – all geared to protecting the public. By far the most significant concerns with rail safety are related to interactions with the public: grade crossing accidents and trespasser issues. Operation Lifesaver is an industry- and government-supported effort which focuses on educating the public both about the importance of staying off railroad tracks and the need for passenger and commercial vehicle drivers to exercise caution at grade crossings. The Section 130 program significantly improves grade crossing safety by providing funding to improve grade crossing protection equipment, and the RCE program has been successful in providing options for communities to close unnecessary crossings.

The hearing included testimony from Mr. Matthew Dietrich, Executive Director, Ohio Rail Development Commission, Honorable Garrett Eucalitto, Commissioner, Connecticut Department of Transportation, on behalf of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, and Mr. Kevin Hicks, Senior Vice President, TranSystems, on behalf of the National Railroad Construction and Maintenance Association.

A copy of Ms. Bevil's written testimony is available [here](#).

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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 603 short line and regional railroads (Class II and III railroads) and railroad supply company members in legislative and regulatory matters. Short lines operate 50,000 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, particularly in rural and small-town America. Categorized as small businesses, short lines transport all commodities, with the agriculture, energy and manufacturing sectors being particularly reliant on short line service. www.aslrra.org

About Pinsky Railroad - Pinsky Railroad Company owns eight short line/regional railroads – Florida Gulf & Atlantic Railroad (FGA), Grenada Railroad (GRYR), Camp Chase Railway (CAMY), Chesapeake & Indiana Railroad (CKIN), Vermilion Valley Railroad (VRRR), Hondo Railway (HRR), North Florida Industrial Railroad (NFL) and Pioneer Valley Railroad (PVRR). Pinsky Railroad Company subsidiaries offer freight services, transloading, railcar storage, and industrial development opportunities.