



A bold voice for transportation workers

December 17, 2014

Mr. John Johnson
Attorney-Advisor
Office of Chief Counsel
Federal Railroad Administration
1200 New Jersey Ave., SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Notice of Intent to Grant Buy America Waivers to National Railroad Passenger Corporation and California High-Speed Rail Authority for the Non-Domestic Final Assembly of Four "Prototype" Tier III High-Speed Rail Trainsets
Docket No. FRA-2012-0033
Federal Railroad Administration

Dear Mr. Johnson,

On behalf of the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD), I write in response to the Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA) notice of intent to issue Buy America waivers to the National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak) and California High-Speed Rail Authority (CAHSRA) for the non-domestic final assembly of prototypes of high-speed rail (HSR) trainsets.¹

At the request of Amtrak and CAHSRA, FRA seeks to waive its Buy America standard in order to allow the final assembly of up to four HSR trainset prototypes to take place outside the U.S. Given the limitations on the domestic production and testing of HSR trainset prototypes as identified in the notice, we will not oppose this narrow waiver to help expand HSR in the U.S. while simultaneously developing domestic production facilities.

However, we urge the agency to resist any further efforts to move away from or weaken important Buy America standard that help maximize the benefits of federal transportation investments. We have long believed that the strength of our transportation system and manufacturing system are linked. And as such, we have consistently insisted on upholding strong Buy America standards that will sustain domestic manufacturing and the millions of jobs its supports.

¹ Attached is a complete list of TTD affiliate unions.

Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO

815 16th Street NW / 4th Floor / Washington DC 20006

Tel: 202.628.9262 / Fax: 202.628.0391 / www.ttd.org

Edward Wytkind, President / Larry I. Willis, Secretary-Treasurer



For that reason, we strongly supported the requirement contained in Amtrak's Request for Proposal that companies include in their bids a detailed employment plan explaining how they will create American jobs, locate manufacturing facilities, recruit disadvantaged workers and those in areas of high unemployment, and invest in workforce development and training. This important language encourages companies to bring the production of quality goods back to the U.S. and to help rebuild U.S. supply chains that will support a burgeoning industry. The full application of the U.S. employment plan will ensure that Amtrak receives top quality rail cars at the best value to U.S. taxpayers. Conversely, issuing waivers to allow the use of non-domestic products weakens our manufacturing capabilities and fails to put Americans to work.

With regard to this notice, FRA states that no domestic manufactures are currently capable of assembling or testing HSR trainsets that meet the specification needs of Amtrak and CAHSRA or their schedules for expanding HSR in the U.S. Additionally, we understand that no track suitable for testing the prototypes exists in the U.S., but is available abroad. By waving the final assembly requirement, FRA will allow Amtrak and CASHRA to progress with its timeline while simultaneously building U.S. plants capable of manufacturing, assembling, and testing future trainsets.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on this Buy America waiver request and hope our comments will be taken into consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Edward Wytkind', with a stylized, looping flourish at the end.

Edward Wytkind
President



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TTD MEMBER UNIONS

Air Line Pilots Association (**ALPA**)
Amalgamated Transit Union (**ATU**)
American Federation of Government Employees (**AFGE**)
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (**AFSCME**)
American Federation of Teachers (**AFT**)
Association of Flight Attendants-CWA (**AFA-CWA**)
American Train Dispatchers Association (**ATDA**)
Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen (**BRS**)
Communications Workers of America (**CWA**)
International Association of Fire Fighters (**IAFF**)
International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (**IAM**)
International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, Iron Ship Builders,
Blacksmiths, Forgers and Helpers (**IBB**)
International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (**IBEW**)
International Longshoremen's Association (**ILA**)
International Organization of Masters, Mates & Pilots, ILA (**MM&P**)
International Union of Operating Engineers (**IUOE**)
Laborers' International Union of North America (**LIUNA**)
Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association (**MEBA**)
National Air Traffic Controllers Association (**NATCA**)
National Association of Letter Carriers (**NALC**)
National Conference of Firemen and Oilers, SEIU (**NCFO, SEIU**)
National Federation of Public and Private Employees (**NFOPAPE**)
Office and Professional Employees International Union (**OPEIU**)
Professional Aviation Safety Specialists (**PASS**)
Sailors' Union of the Pacific (**SUP**)
Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers (**SMART**)
SMART-Transportation Division
Transportation Communications Union/ IAM (**TCU**)
Transport Workers Union of America (**TWU**)
UNITE HERE!
United Mine Workers of America (**UMWA**)
United Steel, Paper and Forestry, Rubber, Manufacturing, Energy, Allied Industrial and Service
Workers International Union (**USW**)

These 32 labor organizations are members of and represented by the TTD

