



*A bold voice for transportation workers*

April 9, 2021

Kenton Kilgore  
RSAC Designated Federal Officer/RSAC Coordinator  
Office of Railroad Safety  
Federal Railroad Administration  
1200 New Jersey Ave., SE  
Washington, DC 20590

**RE: Railroad Safety Advisory Committee Process  
Docket No. FRA-2021-0039**

Dear Mr. Kilgore:

On behalf of the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD), I am pleased to respond to the Federal Railroad Administration's request for comment on its announcement of a public meeting concerning the Railroad Safety Advisory Committee process. TTD consists of 33 affiliate unions representing workers in all modes of transportation, including railroad employees. We therefore have a vested interest in this proceeding.<sup>1</sup>

The meeting notice solicits public input on the Railroad Safety Advisory Committee's (RSAC) current charter and related requirements, and input on how to improve the RSAC process generally to improve efficiency and effectiveness. These comments are submitted for consideration at the April 16, 2021, RSAC meeting.

TTD calls on RSAC and FRA to return to processes that worked effectively for twenty years. During this time, RSAC has been an essential mechanism for developing a rail safety agenda and the combined labor management expertise on the panel has served to greatly aid the FRA's regulatory efforts. Unfortunately, recent changes to the construction of RSAC have served to make it a less effective body. We offer several simple, commonsense measures that would ensure proceedings are efficient and reflective of the perspectives of key stakeholders.

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<sup>1</sup> Attached is a list of TTD's 33 affiliated unions.

**Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO**  
815 Black Lives Plaza, NW / 4<sup>th</sup> Floor / Washington DC 20006  
Tel: 202.628.9262 / Fax: 202.628.0391 / [www.ttd.org](http://www.ttd.org)  
Greg Regan, President / Shari Semelsberger, Secretary-Treasurer



First, we ask that RSAC membership be restored to its makeup prior to 2017. Rail safety is a fundamental responsibility of FRA, and it is crucial that all those affected by safety issues are represented on the RSAC. Restoring membership to those who previously held it would ensure that important voices are not excluded.

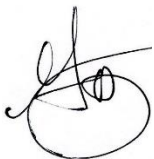
We ask that parties be allowed to select alternates and be permitted to bring attorneys or other subject matter consultants into all sessions (full committee meetings, working group meetings, task force meetings, etc.) if they so desire. Many safety issues require legal interpretation, and it is much more expedient and promotes fuller discussion if legal issues are addressed as part of the process from the onset. Encountering legal barriers later in the process can slow the implementation of critical safeguards to protect workers and passengers, and these delays could be avoided if attorneys were allowed to be present when necessary.

TTD also strongly urges the FRA and RSAC to transcribe all working group proceedings to promote transparency and efficiency. Transcriptions of working group meetings occurred for years prior to 2017 and informed interested organizations and members of the public of deliberations on critical safety issues. Public access to these materials fully ensure the participation required for the implementation of policies to protect rail workers and promote rail safety. Public participation is the bedrock of our system of government, and transparency should be practiced whenever possible.

Finally, TTD urges RSAC to review voting procedures to ensure that only those organizations with a vested interest in each issue are able to vote. Railroads and labor unions have clear interests in all issues as they have a direct role in implementing or benefitting from all safety protections. However, ancillary industry organizations do not always have the same demonstrated stake in certain matters. When members do not have a vested interest in particular issues, their votes can lead to outcomes that are not truly representative of expert opinions of impacted stakeholders.

Implementing these measures will ensure that all necessary voices are heard as we collectively work to improve rail and worker safety. We appreciate the opportunity to comment and look forward to working with FRA and RSAC going forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Greg Regan', written over a circular stamp or mark.

Greg Regan  
President



Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO  
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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 (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 Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW)  
United Mine Workers of America (UMWA)  
United Steel, Paper and Forestry, Rubber, Manufacturing, Energy, Allied Industrial and Service  
Workers International Union (USW)

*These 33 labor organizations are members of and represented by the TTD*

