



December 5, 2016

Rail Labor seeks mediation to settle national contract talks

Rail Labor’s Coordinated Bargaining Group (CBG) released the following statement on December 5, 2016:

Despite our best efforts, collective bargaining with the major U.S. Class 1 railroads completely stalled late last week. Therefore, pursuant to the terms and conditions of the Railway Labor Act, we have today applied to the National Mediation Board (NMB) for the assignment of a federal mediator to assist in our negotiations.

This development is very disappointing, as the Unions in the Coordinated Bargaining Group have been at the negotiating table for almost two years seeking a voluntary settlement. Throughout that time, the Unions have steadfastly maintained that the Carriers’ original demands were unacceptable to our bargaining team, and would be found equally unacceptable by our collective membership.

Nevertheless, the Unions went to the table last week with the intention of reaching a satisfactory voluntary settlement that would fairly address the needs of both sides, but that did not happen. Unfortunately, the railroads apparently believe that the national elections in November have tipped the labor-management balance in this country heavily in their favor, as they made clear that no reasonable and fair resolution is any longer in the offing.

Our members have earned, and rightfully expect, a fair contract settlement that recognizes the fact that the industry continues to reap many billions in net profits annually. We have maintained from the outset that there is no reason not to bring these negotiations to a timely and equitable conclusion.

Instead, the railroads continue to demand extreme concessions that would erode our members’ standard of living and earned benefits. We cautiously anticipate that the involvement of the NMB will cause the industry to refocus on addressing the legitimate needs of the men and women whose labor generates their positive financial returns.

Additional information will be provided as developments warrant.

The Coordinated Bargaining Group is comprised of six unions: the American Train Dispatchers Association; the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (a Division of the Rail Conference of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters); the Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen; the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, Iron Ship Builders, Blacksmiths, Forgers, and Helpers; the National Conference of Firemen and Oilers / SEIU; and the Transportation Division of the International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers.

Collectively, the CBG unions represent more than 85,000 railroad workers covered by the various organizations’ national agreements, and comprise over 58% of the workforce that will be impacted by the outcome of the current bargaining round.