

Colorado State AFL-CIO Executive Council

Resolution

Railroad operation of remote controlled Locomotives within the State of Colorado

Whereas, One of the primary goals of the Colorado State AFL-CIO is to help secure a safe workplace for all Colorado workers; and

Whereas, The Colorado State AFL-CIO takes an active interest in the safety of all Colorado citizens and the security of our homeland; and

Whereas, The Federal Railroad Administration has declined to act on open docket # FRA 2000-8422, which deals with the use of unmanned remote controlled locomotives in the general railroad system; and

Whereas, The Federal Railroad Administration, with the support of the railroads has circumvented the system by issuing only non-binding guidelines for the operation of unmanned remote controlled locomotives; and

Whereas, These guidelines were originally intended only for use in pilot projects; and

Whereas, Railroad companies have seized this opportunity to use these non-binding guidelines not for pilot projects, but for full implementation of unmanned remote controlled locomotives in their operation with employees who receive as little as two weeks of basic training; and

Whereas, Railroad companies have an obligation to implement new technology in a safe manner; and

Whereas, The Federal Railroad Administration, as the safety enforcement agency for the railroad industry has the paramount responsibility to ensure the safety of the general public, as well as railroad workers;

Whereas, More than Eighty-two (82) railroad accidents have occurred in remote controlled locomotive operations around the United States within the past two years, during hasty, unregulated implementation of the remote controlled locomotive operations run by inadequately trained personnel- resulting in serious derailments, property damage, HAZMAT release, personal injuries and death to employees;

Therefore Be It Resolved, that the Colorado State AFL-CIO calls upon the state of Colorado to prohibit the use of remote controlled locomotive technology in switching operations until such time as:

- 1) A thorough risk assessment study of remote controlled locomotive operations has been made and published by a third party.
- 2) An FRA regulation governing remote controlled locomotive operation is promulgated.
- 3) The railroad companies in Colorado give proper notice to all city, county, municipal and State Emergency Planning Committees of their remote controlled locomotive operations and specify the locations where those operation will take place.

Be It finally Resolved, the President of the Colorado State AFL-CIO, having written a letter to Ms. Betty Munro, FRA Acting Administrator, calling on her to reopen FRA Docket No. 2000-8422, recommending the study of remote controlled locomotive operations as requested by the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, the rail division of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, so that railroad employees, citizens, and communities which may be affected can register their concerns about the safety of railroad operation in their neighborhoods, and will continue to take additional appropriate action at the behest of the BLET to bring this matter to a just conclusion.