

RESOLUTION #24

Subject: RAILROADS OPERATING REMOTE CONTROL LOCOMOTIVES
WITHIN THE STATE OF NEBRASKA

Referred to: Resolutions Committee

Submitted by: BLE 88; BLE 98; BLE 183; BLE 303; BLE 621; BLE 622; BLE 623

WHEREAS, A primary goal of the Nebraska State AFL-CIO is to help secure a safe workplace for all Nebraska workers; and

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

WHEREAS, Railroads traversing the state of Nebraska are major transporters of hazardous materials by rail; and

WHEREAS, A significant amount of these hazardous chemicals, soon to include nuclear waste, that are transported on the 3,480 miles of railroads in Nebraska travel through our cities and neighborhoods and in close proximity to our homes, schools and hospitals; and

WHEREAS, Hazardous materials are subject to uncontrolled release if their container is ruptured during a railroad derailment or collision; and

WHEREAS, Railroads in Nebraska are now using Remote Control Locomotive Technology (unmanned locomotives) in their rail operations;

WHEREAS, Railroads in Nebraska are conducting these remote control operations with employees who receive as little as two weeks training; and

WHEREAS, Heretofore all railroads have manned their locomotives with Locomotive Engineers, who are rigorously certified and fully qualified by standards established by the Federal Railway Administration (FRA); and

WHEREAS, The FRA has allowed railroads to establish a new program of lessened training, testing and qualification requirements for remote control operators; and

WHEREAS, The FRA has issued only non-binding guidelines to govern the day-to-day operational practices involving remote control locomotives without regard to the safety of the citizens of the state of Nebraska; and

WHEREAS, Railroads have failed to adopt all the provisions of these minimal FRA guidelines for operational practices; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED: That the Nebraska State AFL-CIO supports the position of BLE and hereby admonishes all railroads within the state of Nebraska to continue to use fully qualified Train Service Engineers to operate all locomotives, including those remotely controlled; and, be it further

RESOLVED: That in the interest of public safety, the Nebraska State AFL-CIO admonishes the FRA to develop comprehensive safety regulations for the use of remote locomotives and that those regulations ensure the highest level of skill and qualification of persons operating all locomotives; and be it finally

RESOLVED That the President of the Nebraska State AFL-CIO will send a letter to FRA Finance Docket No. 2000-8422, which was established at the request of the BLE, and ask Alan Rutter, Administrator of the FRA, to promulgate enforceable regulations governing Remote Control Locomotive Technology that will ensure the safety of the employees, citizens and communities of the state of Nebraska.