



President & CEO – Joanne F. Casey

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden
President of the United States
Washington, DC 20500

The Honorable Kamala Harris
Vice President of the United States
Washington, DC 20500

June 29, 2022

Dear President Biden and Vice President Harris:

The Intermodal Association of North America (IANA) is North America's leading multimodal transportation trade association representing the combined interests of the intermodal freight industry. IANA's membership roster of over 1,000 corporate members includes intermodal and over-the-road motor carriers, railroads (Class I, short-line and regional), water carriers, port authorities, intermodal marketing and logistics companies, and suppliers to the industry such as equipment manufacturers, equipment leasing companies, and technology firms. The Association's associate (non-voting) members include shippers (defined as the beneficial owners of the freight to be shipped), academic institutions, government entities, and non-profit associations. Suffice to say, we understand the complex nature supply chains – stressed in recent years like never before – and value the role that policymakers can play in reducing further complications.

IANA's mission is to promote the growth of efficient intermodal freight transportation through innovation, education, and dialogue. Moving goods in the most efficient and cost-effective way is paramount and a shared goal of industry and policymakers.

To that end, we are writing to you regarding the current state of labor negotiations in the freight rail industry with a specific request to avert the worst possible scenario – a national rail network shutdown as early as mid-September. Failure to reach a reasonable agreement could result in disruptions not just in the rail industry but the broader supply chain, from manufacturers to retailers to consumers. The downstream effect of such an event would be further supply shortages and higher costs to Americans at a time of record inflation. Nobody wants this to occur, and political leaders can play an important role.

Near term this means that the White House should appoint credible and experienced arbitrators certified by the American Arbitration Association to the Presidential Emergency Board (PEB). Ideally these individuals should have specific experience in railroad labor matters given the unique complexities associated with this process, as governed by the Railway Labor Act (RLA).

Instilling the right people on the PEB will help produce a reasonable agreement for railroads and their employees to consider. While nonbinding, this recommendation is crucial and cannot play to any special interests. It must balance the needs of employees working within a continuing tight labor market and the Class I freight railroads who are navigating their own host of issues – including the interrelated matters of labor shortages and service challenges.

The topline goal for policymakers, railroads, rail employees and the overall supply chain sectors including intermodal providers and its customers, should be to avoid disruption while balancing the needs of rail companies and their employees.

To the extent that Congress has to become involved, we hope that similar principles are employed to avoid network disruptions. There is too much at stake, particularly while large portions of the supply chain continue to move historic amounts of cargo.

Thank you for your attention to this issue.

Sincerely,

Joanne F. Casey
President & CEO
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