



# Short Line Inside Track

*An ASLRRRA Members-Only Publication*

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## Compliance Assessments are a Benefit of Membership!

Did you know? ASLRRRA's expert staff is available to conduct comprehensive, on-site compliance assessments for our railroad members. For a nominal fee plus travel costs, you can utilize this effective resource to identify deficiencies, reduce the risk of violations, understand the FRA audit process, and develop checklists to improve your self-audit procedures. These tailored assessments may include document review, interactions and interviews with management and field personnel, and field observations. Upon completion, your railroad will receive a verbal and an optional written report including recommendations for improvement and sample templates and materials. For more information or to schedule a Compliance Assessment, please contact ASLRRRA's Vice President Safety and Compliance, [JR Gelnar](#), at 202-585-3436. [Click here](#) to view our brochure.



**FreightCar  
America  
Parts**

## Legislative Update

### [AASHTO Supports BRACE Act!](#)

Across the U.S., state departments of transportation understand the critical role of short line railroads in their respective states, by connecting areas not served by the large railroads and in supporting economic and job growth. The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) have resolved to support the BRACE Act and continuation of the Short Line Tax Credit. Please [click here](#) to read the resolution, which calls on Congress and the President to enact this important legislation. By allowing the tax credit to continue uninterrupted, the BRACE Act supports national transportation infrastructure needs. The basis for the resolution's assertions is the ASLRRRA 2014 Fact Book.

The [BRACE Act](#) (H.R. 721 and S. 407) to extend the Section 45G short line tax credit continues to gain co-sponsors. Please build on the momentum by reaching out to your representatives today! The short line story must be communicated to representatives and legislative staff on Capitol Hill in order to close the gap for [H.R. 721](#) (currently 178 co-sponsors) and [S. 407](#) (46 co-sponsors). For materials visit our [45G Advocacy page](#).

## Regulatory Update

### [FRA asks ASLRRRA to Emphasize Importance of Addressing Storm Water Drainage](#)

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) has asked ASLRRRA to share with our member railroads the importance of addressing the design and maintenance of storm water drainage systems under tracks and highway structures. Please [click here](#) to read the FRA letter, which describes the June 19, 2009 accident involving a derailment of a

Canadian National Railway freight train at a highway-rail grade crossing, resulting in ruptured tank cars, a release of ethanol, a fire, a fatality and an evacuation of about 600 residences. The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) determined that the probable cause of the accident was storm water washing out the structure beneath the track. The FRA encourages our Association members to coordinate with local authorities and other stakeholders before drainage or design changes to ensure adequate flow of excess storm water.

### **STB Reviews Application to Create a New Short Line**

The Surface Transportation Board (STB) has reviewed the application of Great Lakes Basin Transportation Inc. (GLBT) to operate a 261 mile freight rail line following a ring route around Chicago and connecting outlying counties in Wisconsin, Illinois and Indiana. STB has requested additional information, and responded to certain requests and motions. Please [click here](#) to read a more detailed account.

### **US DOT Announces \$197 Million in Grants for PTC Implementation**

The US Department of Transportation (US DOT) will grant funding of up to \$197 million, as authorized by the FAST Act, to 17 projects in 13 states. This funding is focused on helping commuter and intercity passenger railroads to meet the December 31, 2018 implementation deadline. The 17 projects are located in California, Florida, Illinois, Massachusetts, Maryland, Missouri, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Utah, where passenger operations share the rails with freight. For example in Massachusetts, \$7.82 million has been awarded to install a PTC back office system for MBTA, which moves almost 143,500 passengers per day on 13 active lines, from Providence, RI, and Worcester, Fitchburg, and Newburyport, MA to Boston. The project will be completed by partners Pan Am, CSX Transportation, Amtrak, and Keolis. Read more about each project by [clicking on this link](#). For more information about PTC implementation, please [click on this link](#).

### **FMCSA Withdraws Rulemaking Proposal**

On June 5, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) announced its withdrawal of a proposed rulemaking concerning financial responsibility for motor carriers, freight forwarders, and brokers. Please [click here](#) to view the announcement. This rulemaking would have had an impact on any company that utilizes trucks to move equipment or materials. Many contactors use trucks to move rail equipment across the country and suppliers do the same for smaller or specialized material shipments. FMCSA stated that after reviewing all public comments to the ANPRM, FMCSA has determined that it has insufficient data or information to support moving forward with a rulemaking proposal at this time.

### **Your State May Offer Funding for Infrastructure Improvements**

Did you know? States also have sources of funding for PTC. For example, North Dakota has a revolving rail loan program available to short line railroads and local public agencies to continue or expand rail service or facilitate economic development. As of early 2017, this program has provided \$41.3 million on 49 projects and rehabilitated over 680 miles of branch line track. Contact ASLRRRA's [Jo Strang](#) for more information on how to find such funding programs.

### **Iowa DOT Solicits Comments on State Freight Plan**

The [Iowa Department of Transportation](#) (DOT) has posted a proposed amendment to its State Freight Plan in order to align the plan with the federal Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act. Various stakeholders and planning agencies have shaped the changes and now the public has another chance to provide comment until July 16. To view the plan, other resources, and public engagement record, [click on this link](#).

## FRA to Host Grade Crossing Safety Workshop

On Tuesday, August 15, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) will hold a Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Safety workshop at the Westin Hotel in St. Louis, Missouri. This workshop will bring together national and international subject matter experts to identify and prioritize specific research needs related to highway-rail grade crossing safety. The agenda will cover five hot button areas: Engineering/Technology, Enforcement, Community Outreach/Education, Hazard Management, and Human Factors. For more information and to register, please [click here](#) today!

## Railroad Retirement Board Explains Unemployment and Sickness Benefits Available

Claimants with questions about unemployment or sickness benefits, or who are seeking information about their claims and benefit payments, can contact an RRB office by calling toll-free at 1-877-772-5772. Claimants can also access an online service, “View RUIA Account Statement” in the Benefit Online Services section of [www.rrb.gov](http://www.rrb.gov), which provides a summary of the unemployment and sickness benefits paid to them. Most RRB offices are open to the public on weekdays from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., except on Wednesdays when offices are open from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. RRB offices are closed on Federal holidays.

## ASLRRRA Out and About

### ASLRRRA Staff and Board Member Attend North Shore Railroad’s Celebration

North Shore Railroad Company (NSRR) hosted a celebration on June 2nd for employees and dignitaries to celebrate its “Triple Crown” recognition in Northumberland., PA. NSRR received the distinguished honor of being named as Railway Age 2017 Short Line of the Year, Norfolk Southern Short Line of the Year, and 2017 ASLRRRA Marketing Award Winner. Amy Krouse, Director of Strategic Communications, and Carl Belke, ASLRRRA Vice President, Eastern Region, were on hand to mark the occasion. North Shore Railroad President Gary Shields attributed the North Shore’s success to its employees, saying “they care about the customers [and] they are interested in growing the business.” The company received the awards in part due to its new high-and-wide program, which came about because of growth at two area power plants.” These high-and-wide loads, [NSRR] became experts at it,” notes Krouse.

The NSRR handled 60 high-and-wide loads in 2016, which was more than the previous 31 years combined. Belke remarked that “these railroads have been through some really tough times, and through all of that, they have built this rail system up that you see now, and it’s a huge success story.” Read more in the local press by [clicking here](#).

At right, attendees of the celebration enjoy a photo opportunity.

North Shore has received the marketing award five times over the past 14 years, and has been named short line of the year twice for Railway Age. North Shore Railroad Company operates six short lines including; Juniata Valley, Lycoming Valley, Nittany and Bald Eagle, North Shore, Shamokin Valley, and Union County Industrial Railroads.



## Save The Dates for ASLRRA's Regional Meetings!

**Southern Region Meeting  
Charleston Marriott  
Charleston, South Carolina  
September 25 - 27, 2017**

**Eastern Region Meeting  
The Omni Providence Hotel  
Providence, Rhode Island  
October 23 - 25, 2017**

**Central/Pacific Region Meeting  
Intercontinental Kansas City at the Plaza  
Kansas City, Missouri  
November 13 - 15, 2017**

**General Counsel Symposium/Finance & Administration Seminar  
Intercontinental Kansas City at the Plaza  
Kansas City, Missouri  
November 15 - 17, 2017**

### [Upcoming Industry Events](#)

#### **Featured Event: FRA Webinar on June 20th**

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) are kicking off a new joint Webinar Series that will discuss a variety of highway-rail grade crossing issues, as well as tools and strategies to enhance safety. The first Webinar will take place on **Tuesday, June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2017**, from **1:00 to 2:30 ET**, and will focus on the recently published [Highway-Railway Grade Crossing Action Plan and Project Prioritization Noteworthy Practices Guide](#). Please [click here](#) and register today!

Please [click here](#) to view a list of upcoming industry events.

Short Line Inside Track is published by American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association. Please contact [Elizabeth Sands](#), Editor, with any questions or comments.