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ASLRRA Urges US DOT to Consider Small Business Perspective in Rulemakings
Jo Strang Participates in National Regulatory Fairness Hearing on Behalf of Short Line Railroads

WASHINGTON, August 19, 2019 – Jo Strang, Senior Vice President, Safety & Regulatory Policy for the American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association (ASLRRA) testified today on behalf of the nation’s 603 short line railroads before the Small Business Administration during a hearing on National Regulatory Fairness.

Strang urged the office to consider small business needs as required under the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act, “SBREFA”, when considering regulatory policy. In addition, Strang called for any new action to be reviewed based on sound data, and to provide the opportunity for the community to engage with the administration prior to a rulemaking.

“The U.S. DOT should require agencies within the Department to use current data and sound science to establish the need for a new rule, and give the public meaningful opportunity to review, assess, supplement, and comment upon it,” said Jo Strang in written comments in advance of the hearing. “Too often agencies give little or no relief to small carriers from the effects of rules designed for giant Class I railroads based on cursory economic analyses based on faulty assumptions.”
In addition, there are specific rules that ASLRRA requested the Agency review including the Training Standards Rule and the Risk Reduction Rule. ASLRRA has submitted petitions to alter these rulings, providing concrete suggestions to enable small business railroads to reasonably implement them.

ASLRRA also requested that the Agency consider the removal of obsolete inspection and reporting and communication requirements to ease unnecessary regulatory burden on small business railroads.

Finally, ASLRRA asked that the Federal Railroad Administration follow its agency policy on small businesses, providing consistent training for small business railroads and work with short lines to gain compliance, rather than immediately assess civil penalties.

“We would like to recognize the fact that some regions are taking a collaborative approach to safety enforcement. While not soft on enforcement, they work with the railroad to identify problem areas and build relationships that foster a culture of safety and compliance. They provide training on the regulations and try to help small business railroads. Giving railroads the chance to fix the issue and adjust operations is the key to creating a safer working environment,” shared Strang during oral testimony. “FRA working together with the railroad will have long-lasting positive safety impacts that move the industry forward.”

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About ASLRRA - The American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association (ASLRRA) is a non-profit trade association representing the interests of the nation’s 603 short line and regional railroads and railroad supply company members in legislative and regulatory matters. Short lines operate 47,500 miles of track in 49 states, or approximately 29% of the national railroad network, touching in origination or termination one out of every five cars moving on the national railroad system, serving customers who otherwise would be cut off from the national railroad network. www.aslrra.org