Tax Credit Bills Enjoy Growing Support in House, Senate

One month after its introduction, House bill H.R. 510, which would make the short line tax credit permanent, already has 108 co-sponsors while a similar bill in the Senate, S. 203, has 21 co-sponsors. ASLRRA’s recent fly-ins have been successful in garnering support from legislators.

“Clearly there is at least one thing Congress can agree on - the need to invest in small railroad infrastructure that keeps goods moving from small town and rural America into the U.S. and world economies,” said ASLRRA President Chuck Baker in a press release. “We urge Congress to act now to extend the short line tax credit into 2019 and beyond. Delaying action defers the benefits of this credit to all the thousands of customers and communities that depend on it.”

One issue hindering the push for more co-sponsors is the lack of knowledge freshman members of Congress have about short line and regional railroads and the critical role they play in the national economy. Additionally, the government shutdown took much attention away from general legislative efforts, including the passage of these bills.

ASLRRA encourages its members to contact their representatives and convey the importance of the tax credit to their businesses. ASLRRA’s website provides information and supporting documents for members to use, including a handout with an overview of the tax credit and its benefits.

Nominations Sought for ASLRRA Associate Member Board Seats

ASLRRA is seeking nominations for individuals wishing to run for election to the board of directors representing associate members.

This year’s Nominating Committee Co-Chairs are two former board members, Steve Friedland of Short Line Data Systems and Beth Garguilo of Lincoln Transportation Insurance Brokers. They will be assisted by ASLRRA’s Vice President of Member Engagement & Sales Kathy Keeney, who serves as staff liaison to the Supplier Committee.

There are two board seats representing associate members and one board vacancy that will need to be filled at the annual convention in Orlando. The first board term has expired for Steven Youschak of American Rail Engineers, but he will run for another term. JoAnne Miner from GE Transportation holds the other associate board member position.

The term for director is two years. Responsibilities involve two in-person board meetings annually and several conference calls throughout the year. Board members are also expected to attend the annual convention and fall regional meetings, and urged to attend Railroad Day on Capitol Hill. The newly elected board member will serve on the Supplier Committee and provide agenda items to benefit the membership.
The nomination period will end at close of business on Feb. 22. Any member wishing to nominate a candidate should contact one of the nominating committee leaders. Candidates need to supply the committee with a short bio, photo and a few sentences about why they would like to serve on ASLRRA’s Board of Directors. The information will be used for a ballot to be distributed to the primary contact of every member company in good standing.

Please contact Beth on Beth.Garguilo@lincolnins.com or (315) 768-6110 or Steve on sfriedland@sdsrocs.com or (973) 769-6505 to nominate yourself or to suggest another candidate.

Advertising in the CONNECTIONS Convention Program Enables Members to Widen Their Audience

Interested in raising your profile at the annual convention and getting your brand/latest products in front of railroad decision-makers? Want to drive more traffic to your booth in the Expo Hall? Then you won’t want to miss the chance to place a cost-effective ad in our Official Convention Program that contains key need-to-know information about the event and is distributed on-site to all attendees.

Another valuable option is a convention sponsorship. There are still several high-profile sponsorship opportunities available that will provide great visibility for your company before, during and after the convention. Contact ASLRRA Vice President Kathy Keeney for more details.

ASLRRA Members Receive Close to $20 Million in FRA CRISI Grants

On Feb. 8, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) announced it had awarded $56.9 million in grant funding to 18 projects in 16 states through the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) program.

ASLRRA member railroads received almost $20 million in CRISI grants, which will go toward projects like bridge improvements, rail replacement, railroad tie installation and slope stabilization. Several other projects will fund improvements that will benefit multiple freight railroads, improving efficiency and reducing delays.

See below for a list of ASLRRA member grant recipients, the names of their projects and the amount each project received.
The focus of CRISI grants is rail infrastructure, and rural projects were guaranteed at least 25 percent of the potential award money. In addition, $10 million was required to go to restoration or initiation of inner-city passenger rail service.

Some key criteria for winning projects included how well they met important FRA departmental objectives, some of which, according to the FRA website, are “supporting economic vitality; leveraging federal funds to attract other sources of funding; preparing for project life-cycle costs; using innovative approaches to improve safety and expedite project delivery; and holding recipients accountable for achieving specific, measurable outcomes.”

ASLRRA Members Awarded CRISI Grants:

- Heart of Georgia Railroad, Georgia - Upgrade Project (Up to $2,027,192)
- Iowa Interstate Railroad, Iowa - Booneville Bridge Project (Up to $3,470,500)
- Rapid City, Pierre & Eastern Railroad, South Dakota - South Dakota West River Rail Improvement Project (Up to $978,200)
- Panhandle Northern Railroad, Texas - Borger Texas Chemical Hazard Elimination Safety and Security Improvement (Up to $2,164,255)
- New England Central Railroad, Vermont - Vermonter Amtrak Safety Project for Passenger and Freight Rail Service (Up to $2,082,519)
- Brightline Trains LLC, Florida - South Florida East Coast Rail Corridor Intrusion Prevention Project (Up to $2,373,441)
- Terminal Railroad Association of St. Louis, Missouri - Replacement of MacArthur Bridge Truss over Broadway (Up to $7,170,346)

Three New Board Members Confirmed to Lead Railroad Retirement Board

The Railroad Retirement Board’s three new board members took their oaths of office the week of Feb. 4. Erhard R. Chorlé is the chairman, Johnathan D. Bragg is the labor member and Thomas R. Jayne is the carrier member.

The RRB chairman is appointed to represent the interests of the public, while the labor member represents the interests of railroad labor and the carrier member represents railroad employers.

Prior to his appointment, Chorlé was a partner at the Chicago law firm of Pederson & Houpt, working in the company’s corporate and business counseling practice group. Bragg was vice president with the Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen and a permanent member of the National Railroad Adjustment Board. Jayne, whose appointment was recommended by ASLRRA, was a senior general attorney for BNSF Railway Company.
ASLRA Fly-ins Educate Legislators on Importance of 45G Tax Credit

In Washington, we once again find ourselves facing the possibility of a government shutdown, and despite constantly changing reports of the status FY2019 appropriations talks, a deal is now on the table. Assuming this deal stays intact through Friday and the president is willing to sign this legislation, the government should stay open past the end of the week.

These next few days also present a critical window for the inclusion of 45G in the final funding package. Please consider reaching out to your member of Congress, asking them to communicate with their leadership to express the importance of 45G passing as soon as possible.

As always, please also consider inviting your representative to your railroad. If your representative is new to Congress take some time to tell them about your operations in their district. Members of Congress love hearing from the businesses they represent and many would appreciate an opportunity to learn more by visiting your railroad. Feel free to reach out to your team in D.C. if you are interested in hosting an event, we are here to help. Contact Will Resch at Will.resch@cch-llc.com with questions or for assistance.

ASLRA Offers Compliance Assessments as a Member-Exclusive Benefit!

Our expert staff is available to conduct comprehensive on-site compliance assessments for member railroads. Ensure your railroad meets FRA compliance guidelines by scheduling your assessment today!

- Identify Deficiencies
- Reduce Risk Violations
- Gain Understanding of FRA Audit Process

ASLRA Out and About

Gelnar Represents ASLRA at AAR Committee Meetings in Florida

ASLRA’s Vice President, Safety and Compliance J.R. Gelnar attended two CSX-hosted meetings in Jacksonville, Fla. the week of Jan. 21 and the week of Feb. 4.

In January, Gelnar attended the Association of American Railroads (AAR) Hazmat and AAR Tank Car Committee meetings. The Hazmat Committee discussed current and future regulation, especially the anticipated final rule regarding oil spill response plans, and the progress of the LNG transportation by rail petition before PHMSA.

The Tank Car Committee received a status update on the conversion to ‘DOT 117’ tanks for crude oil and ethanol service. The Federal Railroad Administration provided an end-of-year review of tank car repair and manufacturing facilities. Multiple tank car design and repair projects were reviewed and discussed.

February’s meeting was for AAR’s Security Committee. The committee discussed an upcoming TSA workshop, which will focus on guidelines for developing security plans and conducting vulnerability
assessments. The development of future priorities, update of the Industry Security Plan and committee direction were also major agenda items.

**ASLRRRA Announcements**

**Posner Donation to Operation Lifesaver Will Help Fund Suicide Prevention Projects**

A donation from the Posner Foundation of Pittsburgh to Operation Lifesaver, Inc. will help fund four projects meant to educate the public about railroad safety.

Henry Posner III, chairman of ASLRRRA member Iowa Interstate Railroad and a trustee of the Posner Foundation of Pittsburgh, expressed a sense of pride in being able to support the efforts of Operation Lifesaver, which not only works to reduce fatalities and injuries at highway-rail grade crossings but is becoming involved in suicide prevention initiatives.

One of the projects funded by the Posner Foundation donation involves leveraging the Federal Railroad Administration’s Trespass and Suicide Dashboard to target specific U.S. locations and distribute customized messages in those communities.

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**ASLRRRA Events**

**Webinars**

**ASLRRRA Young Professionals Committee: What You Need to Know - 2/27/2019**

This webinar will discuss the ASLRRRA Young Professionals Committee and why it is important to join. We will review the committee’s mission, vision and future goals and describe resources members can use to keep abreast of all future activities.

**SLSI Webinar - 3/27/2019**

Join a representative from the Federal Railroad Administration to discuss security plans, awareness and other critical components.

[Click here](#) for more ASLRRRA events.
Industry Events

Click here for a listing of industry events.

Views & News is published by American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association. Please contact Amy Krouse, editor, with questions or comments.