45G Extension Included in H.R. 3301

H.R. 3301, The Taxpayer Certainty and Disaster Tax Relief Act of 2019 has been introduced in the House Ways & Means Committee. The railroad track maintenance credit is covered in Section 112. The section extends 45G to Jan. 1, 2021 and retroactively to the beginning of 2018.

“ASLRA is pleased to see forward movement in providing certainty for railroads, their employees and suppliers, and their thousands of customers throughout small town and rural America with the introduction of HR 3301, the Taxpayer Certainty and Disaster Tax Relief Act of 2019, which includes the extension of the Short Line Railroad 45G Maintenance Tax Credit through 2020. We are eager to work with Congress as they continue the process to finalize legislation that can assure investment in rail infrastructure on a proactive basis. This investment is good for the American economy, it protects the environment, and it enhances surface transportation safety,” said Chuck Baker, President, ASLRA.

HR 3301 would provide an extension of three years, through December 31, 2020, for the Railroad Maintenance 45G Tax Credit, which expired on December 31, 2017.

The bill is scheduled to be marked up on June 20, 2019 beginning at 9:30am.

DOT Announces Funding Opportunity for Port Grants – Railroad Projects Are Eligible

On June 13 the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) announced a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for $292.7 million in grants through the Port Infrastructure Development Program.

The aim of the program is to increase investments in America’s infrastructure by supporting projects that will improve the safety, efficiency or reliability of goods moving into, out of or within a port.
According to the Maritime Administration website, eligible projects must be within the boundaries of a coastal seaport or, if outside coastal seaport boundaries, be directly related to port operations or to an intermodal connection to a port. This includes rail improvements both within and connecting to the port, port-related intelligent transportation system hardware and software, and more.

Grant applications are due September 16. Follow the link to read the DOT’s NOFO. The DOT also plans to offer special webinars explaining the port grant application process, and will update this site with webinar information as it becomes available. Consider one of ASLRA’s Grant Writing Program members to assist with your submission!

**Railroad Retirement Board Discusses Reporting Events That May Affect Benefits**

The Railroad Retirement Board’s (RRB) newest addition to its question and answer series talks about the need for beneficiaries to report events that may affect payment of benefits to the employee or members of the employee’s family.

Events that go unreported can result in overpayment that must be repaid, sometimes with interest and penalties. Such events include payments from social security or other benefits, post-retirement work activity, death of an annuitant or a change in family status.

The RRB’s document explains how such events as listed above can affect benefit payments, as well as what to do to contest an overpayment decision or figure out whether an event should be reported.

"ASLRA Compliance Assessments

Keeping up with federal rule-making and regulatory interpretation is difficult at best, so the ability to review all of our regulatory programs with the knowledge base of the ASLRA was invaluable.

Visit www.aslrra.org to learn more!

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**BRACE Act Continues to Gain Co-Sponsors**

Gains were made in both the House and Senate on co-sponsors for the BRACE Act. In the House H.R.510 was up to 221 co-sponsors and in the Senate, S.203 was up to 47 co-sponsors. Chambers, Conlon & Hartwell lobbying team was busy with meetings on Capitol Hill all week to continue the forward progress of the bill.

**Try Your Hand at Lobbying for Railroads In Washington, D.C.**

If you are looking for a July get-away for you and your family, please consider coming to Washington, D.C. and taking in the history of our country. And, while here, taking part in a few congressional staff meetings for the 45G short line infrastructure tax credit. If you would like to meet with lawmakers, please let Ryan Solt or Will Resch know at ryan.solt@cch-llc.com or will.resch@cch-llc.com and our team at Chambers, Conlon and Hartwell (CC&H) will work to schedule meetings with offices in the House and Senate so you can tell the short line story directly to the staffs who decide what becomes
law in this country. Staff at CC&H is happy to schedule meetings on Capitol Hill for you and your family.

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**ASLRRA Announcements**

**Association Mourns Death of Strasburg Railroad President**

ASLRRA joins member Strasburg Railroad in mourning the death of its president, Craig Lefever, on June 16 after a battle with cancer.

Lefever’s career at Strasburg spanned over 30 years, where he held such positions as compliance officer and car shop supervisor before rising to the position of vice president and general manager and, ultimately, president in December 2018.

Lefever is survived by his wife Ginger, children Brent, Taylor and Mya and sisters Kimberly and Kathi. A service celebrating Craig’s life will take place at Providence Church, 269 Cinder Road, New Providence, PA on Wednesday, July 3, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. The family will receive friends following the service. Traditional interment will be private.

**The Young Professionals Committee Announces New Leadership**

Michele Malski, SPRING has been appointed as Chair of the Committee. The inaugural slate of officers was elected by the Committee:

Karen McCash, Collins Aerospace, will fill the seat for the Young Professionals on the Board of Directors.

Chelsea Sweet, Bowers & Company will serve as Vice-Chair.

Miranda Parks, RailSoft Systems will serve as Secretary.

**Limited Spots Remain for ASLRRA and Iowa Northern Railway’s GCOR Training July 16-18**

ASLRRA and member Iowa Northern Railway will provide in-depth training on General Code of Operating Rules (GCOR) July 16-18 at Iowa Northern’s training facility in Waterloo, Iowa.

The three-day training seminar is intended for railroads that have adopted the GCOR as operating rules and may be used to meet operating-rules training as required by 49 CFR Part 240, 242 and 214 Subpart C. The seminar will be taught by ASLRRA’s Vice President of Safety and Compliance JR Gelnar and Iowa Northern Railway’s Assistant General Manager Mark Vaughn.

Fewer than 15 spots remain for the seminar, so be sure to register to reserve a seat. Please visit the registration page for additional details and to access the online hotel registration link.

**Mark Your Calendars Now for Regional Meetings This Fall**

Join us for this year’s Regional Meetings. Topics will include disaster recovery, technology, legislative and regulatory issues, marketing and much more.

**Central/Pacific Region Meeting**

Grand Hyatt, San Antonio, Texas
Wednesday, September 11 - Friday, September 13
Eastern Region Meeting
Hyatt Regency, Columbus, Ohio
Monday, October 7 - Wednesday, October 9
**FRA Drug and Alcohol Seminar available concurrently Monday to Wednesday

Finance and Administration Seminar
Hyatt Regency, Columbus, Ohio
Wednesday, October 9 - Thursday, October 10

General Counsel Symposium
Hyatt Regency, Columbus, Ohio
Thursday, October 10 - Friday, October 11

Southern Region Meeting
Charlotte Marriott City Center, Charlotte, North Carolina
Monday, November 11 - Wednesday, November 13

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ASLRRA’s Member Discount Program Now Includes Grant Writing Services!
Click to learn more about these Preferred Providers:

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ASLRRA Webinars
Shaping Your Grant Application for USDOT Reviewers - 6/25/2019
The evaluation process for BUILD grant applications has changed. This webinar focuses on tips to improve the competitiveness of your FY 2019 BUILD application.

How Short Line and Regional Railroads Can Shift to Digital - 7/31/2019
CloudMoyo’s Ashok Madhavan will outline the need for a cultural shift in railroads to adopt a safety-first approach and show how the railroad industry can leverage technology in an effort to build a strong safety culture.

Click here for more ASLRRA 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.