On Jan. 25, the U.S. Senate introduced S.203, which would make the Short Line Railroad Maintenance Tax Credit (45G Tax Credit) permanent, and is nearly identical to the House bill H.R. 510 introduced on Jan. 11. The House bill has generated 50 co-sponsors since introduction.

With both bills, the House and Senate aim to help short line railroads finance repairs and development by providing a credit of 50% of the amount spent on qualifying track maintenance and railroad infrastructure projects, capped at $3,500 per mile.

The Short Line Tax Credit was first enacted in 2005 and has been renewed six times. It expired in December 2017 and has not yet been renewed retroactively for 2018 despite having broad bipartisan support. Since being implemented, the tax credit has resulted in over $4 billion in investments in short line railroads.

“Short line rail service was a top consideration when assessing further investment in our operations,” said Jon Watson, President, JC Watson Company, a fourth-generation family-owned onion producer, packer and shipper, headquartered in Parma, Idaho. “Without the confidence that service would continue with investment in upgrades, our strategic plans would be put on hold, significantly impacting our business and the local economy. It is imperative that the Short Line Tax Credit is available to assist our short line partner in investing more of their private capital.”

**Sign Up for Training with the Short Line Safety Institute at ASLRA’s CONNECTIONS Convention**

The Short Line Safety Institute (SLSI) will be providing various learning opportunities to attendees at ASLRA’s annual CONNECTIONS Convention. These opportunities include a day-long Hazardous Materials Train-the-Trainer Course and a safety train tour. Let SLSI’s safety experts help supplement your understanding of safety regulations and procedures.

Sign up for SLSI events by adding them when completing your general registration form. Space is limited. Register for the convention before Feb. 25 to save $100. Also, be sure to book a hotel room early.
Synthetic Cannabinoid Officially Listed as Schedule I Substance

The Drug Enforcement Administration issued a final rule on Jan. 29 placing a synthetic cannabinoid in schedule I of the Controlled Substances Act.

As a schedule I controlled substance, those who handle or propose to handle the synthetic cannabinoid, named N-(1-amino-3,3-dimethyl-1-oxobutan-2-yl)-1-(cyclohexylmethyl)-1 H-indazole-3-carboxamide, with other names MAB-CHMINACA or ADB-CHMINACA, are subject to regulatory controls and administrative, civil and criminal sanctions.

ASLRRRA Holds Fly-ins to Push for Tax Credit Support

ASLRRRA is holding two fly-ins, one today, Jan. 30 and Feb. 7. As you are already aware, H.R. 510, which is largely identical to the BRACE Act in the 115th Congress, has been introduced. We have 168 cosponsor targets, all of which are members who cosponsored this legislation in the previous Congress and who won reelection.

As of Jan. 29, we have already secured 51 cosponsors in the House of Representatives. Now is great time to call your representatives and ask them to cosponsor H.R. 510. If they are new to Congress take some time to tell them about your operations in their district. Late last week a Senate version of 45G tax credit was introduced as stand-alone legislation. We are happy to announce that S.203 has 12 original sponsors in the Senate.

Now is a great time to reach out to members of Congress or senators and ask them to cosponsor the 45G tax credit. If they are already cosponsors, take this opportunity to thank them for being an early supporter. Members of Congress love hearing from businesses in their district and many would appreciate an opportunity to learn more by visiting your railroad. Feel free to reach out to your team in Washington, D.C. if you are interested in hosting an event. We are here to help. Contact Will Resch at will.resch@cch-llc.com.
New Members

ASLRA is Pleased to Welcome Four New Members

ICF Inc., based in Fairfax, Virginia, addresses issues at the nexus of transport, environment, energy, and economic development. Services include managing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review process and complying with other Federal and State specific environmental regulations, permitting, and compliance monitoring.
Our contact: **Principal Elizabeth Diller**

Precision Contracting Services, based in Jupiter, Florida, is a multi-faceted technical integration and professional services firm providing design, installation maintenance and asset management services for fiber optic and other low-voltage communication and infrastructure applications. Many thanks to Wabtec for recommending Precision Contracting Services join ASLRA.
Our contact: **Director Sales & Marketing Matt Davis**

The Reinforced Earth Company, based in Reston, Virginia, has been designing and supplying innovative engineering structures and reinforced backfill solutions for over 45 years. In the U.S., RECo has built a reputation for engineering excellence, architectural creativity, and an unyielding focus on quality. Technical solutions are defined by three functions corresponding to the application: RETAIN, CROSS, PROTECT.
Our contact: **Business Development Manager Paul Michiels**

Sussman Shank LLP, based in Portland, Oregon, is a full-service business, litigation and commercial bankruptcy law firm for over 30 years. Clients include public and private companies, government entities, institutions, non-profit organizations and individuals. A special thanks to ASLRA General Counsel Keith Borman for recommending Sussman Shank join the ASLRA.
Our contact: **Partner Timothy J. Coleman**
Save the Date for This Year’s Regional Meetings

ASLRRA will be holding its regional meetings in San Antonio, Texas, Columbus, Ohio and Charlotte, N.C. this year. Regional meetings feature top-notch speakers, engaging education sessions and hours of networking. Those interested in attending are encouraged to note the upcoming dates in their calendars.

Central/Pacific Region Meeting
September 11-13 at the San Antonio Grand Hyatt in San Antonio, Texas

Eastern Region Meeting
October 7-9 at the Columbus, Ohio Hyatt Regency in Columbus, Ohio

Finance & Administration and General Counsel Symposium
October 9-11 at the Columbus, Ohio Hyatt Regency in Columbus, Ohio

Southern Region Meeting
November 11-13 at the Charlotte Marriott City Center in Charlotte, N.C.

Act Now to Secure Advertising in CONNECTIONS Convention Program

Interested in raising your profile at the convention and getting your brand/latest products in front of railroad decision-makers? Consider a cost-effective ad in our Official Convention Program or a prominent convention sponsorship. Contact ASLRRA Vice President Kathy Keeney at kkeeney@aslrra.org for more details.

Webinars

ASLRRA Young Professionals Committee: What You Need to Know – 2/27/2019

This webinar will showcase the ASLRRA 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.

Click here for more ASLRRA events.

Industry Events

Click here for a listing of industry events.
ASLRRA Out and About

Gitchell Attends ARDA Executive Forum

ASLRRA’s Director, Regulatory Affairs Crystal Gitchell attended the American Railway Development Association (ARDA) Executive Forum Jan. 22-23 in St. Augustine, Fla. The theme of this year’s forum was “Let’s Grow Together,” and sessions included discussions of innovations in data collection, dealing with tenant bankruptcies and developing former military land. ARDA promotes economic development, real estate development, technology, and environmental activities of North American railroads.

ASLRRA Safety and Training Committee Meeting Held in Florida

The ASLRRA Safety and Training Committee meeting was held in Jacksonville, Fla. the week of Jan. 21. The committee discussed topics including Part 243 training standards, leadership training, template and checklist development and regulatory issues. Sam Cotton also provided an update on the Short Line Safety Institute. ASLRRA’s Jo Strang, Keith Borman and J.R. Gelnar represented the Association at the meeting.

ASLRRA would like to thank Patriot Rail for hosting the meeting, and recognize outgoing chair Gary Vaughn, Watco Companies, LLC., for his many years of dedicated service to the industry. Mitch Harris, Rio Grande Pacific Corporation, will be interim chair until committee elections at ASLRRA’s annual CONNECTIONS Convention.

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