

BNSF Request to Outsource Train Safety Inspections Must be Rejected

WASHINGTON, DC – *Edward Wytkind, President of the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD), offers the following statement regarding BNSF Railway Company's request for a U.S. government waiver to have its trains inspected in Mexico. TTD also submitted [official comments](#) to the Department of Transportation in response to BNSF's request.*

“There are key functions in the railroad business that are too important to outsource to the lowest bidder, and the safety inspection of trains belongs on that list.

“We believe that BNSF Railway Company's requested exemption from safety rules is a wrongheaded attempt to evade safety rules and shed costs and American jobs – it defies the will of Congress.

“Union Pacific (UP) made a similar waiver request in 2004 which was rejected by the Bush Administration's Department of Transportation, and again in 2006 which UP withdrew amidst calls for a public hearing on the matter. Since then, Congress addressed this issue in the most recent rail safety bill, the Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008. This law sets standards that must be met for requests of this kind to even be considered – standards which are not met by BNSF in its waiver application.

“BNSF has not shown that inspections will be performed under regulations that are equivalent to U.S. standards, which is required by law. In addition, the BNSF request for a waiver fails to cite any agreement between Mexico and the U.S. that would give our government the uninhibited right to inspect facilities and work done in Mexico.

“BNSF's attempt to outsource safety-sensitive train inspections to Mexico doesn't begin to meet the requirements outlined in the rail safety bill. We urge the Department of Transportation to deny BNSF's request.”

TTD submitted official comments to the Department of Transportation regarding BNSF's waiver request. Those comments can be found on the TTD website.