

# NATIONAL RAILWAY LABOR CONFERENCE

251 – 18<sup>th</sup> STREET, SOUTH, SUITE 750, ARLINGTON, VA 22202 / TELEPHONE: 571-336-7600 FAX: 571-336-7605

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BRENDAN M. BRANON  
Chairman

JEFFREY F. RODGERS  
Vice Chairman

MICHAEL P. MARATTO  
General Counsel

Via USPS and email

May 19, 2022

Ms. Pat Sims, Director  
Office of Mediation Services  
National Mediation Board  
1301 K Street, NW, Suite 250 East  
Washington, D.C. 20005  
[sims@nmb.gov](mailto:sims@nmb.gov)

Re: Application for Mediation

Dear Ms. Sims,

Prior to the outset of this bargaining round, the Union Pacific Railroad Company (“UP”) authorized the National Carriers’ Conference Committee (“NCCC”) to be its representative with respect to proposals that by law or agreement of the parties are not amenable to multi-employer handling. Pursuant to that authorization, the NCCC served a Section 6 notice on November 1, 2019, upon the International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers – Transportation Division (“SMART-TD”) regarding the size and consist of train crews.

As Chairman of the NCCC, I and other colleagues along with UP representatives have made efforts to reach an agreement with SMART-TD in conference on the proposals contained within the November 1, 2019 Section 6 notice. At this point, pursuant to Section 5, First of the Railway Labor Act, 45 U.S.C. §155, UP is invoking the Mediation Board’s services in this dispute. Accordingly, enclosed please find two copies of an application for mediation and required exhibits.

UP is committed to working with SMART-TD, the Board, and its mediators to find the path to an amicable settlement and successful resolution of the issues raised in these proposals.

Sincerely,



Brendan M. Branon

Enclosures

cc: (via email only)  
Maqui Parkerson, Vice President, Labor Relations & Sustainability, UP  
Rod Doerr, Vice President, UP  
Jeremy Ferguson, President, SMART-TD  
Brent Leonard, Vice President, SMART-TD  
Luke Edington, General Chairman, SMART-TD  
Terry Dixon, General Chairman, SMART-TD



## Application for Mediation Services

TO THE NATIONAL MEDIATION BOARD, Washington, D. C. 20005: A dispute has arisen between the parties shown below which has not been adjusted between them, and the services of the National Mediation Board under Section 5, First, of the Railway Labor Act, are hereby invoked on specific questions set forth below. The approximate number of employees involved is 4020 in the craft(s) or class(es) of train and engine service employees.

**THE SPECIFIC ISSUE(S) IN DISPUTE** (If necessary extend question on additional sheet or attach exhibit):

Train crew staffing and/or redeployment of ground service employees, all as further provided in the Carriers' Section 6 Notice dated November 1, 2019.
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### PARTIES TO DISPUTE

Carrier		Organization/Individual	
Carrier Name	Union Pacific Railroad Company (Represented by the National Carriers' Conference Committee)	Organization Name	SMART-TD
L. R. Official/Title	Maqui Parkerson, VP Labor Relations & Sustainability (Brendan Branon, NCCC Chairman)	Organization Official/Title	Brent Leonard, Transportation Division Vice President, SMART-TD
Address	251 18 <sup>th</sup> Street South, Suite 750	Address	5990 S.W. 58th St., Ste. F
City, State and Zip Code	Arlington, VA	City, State and Zip Code	Topeka, KS 66614
Telephone	571-336-7618	Telephone	(785) 273-7737
Fax		Fax	
Email	BBranchon@rrnrlc.org	Email	bleonard@smart-union.org

### WORKING AGREEMENT

If an agreement governing rates of pay, rules, or working conditions is in effect, give name of parties thereto and date thereof. If there is no such agreement, so state See attached list of agreements (and any other relevant agreements pertaining to or restricting changes to crew size and/or redeployment).

### COMPLIANCE WITH RAILWAY LABOR ACT

1. If this dispute involves change in the above-mentioned agreement, attach copy of the 30-day notice served by party desiring change and insert date of notice here See attached Section 6 Notice dated November 1, 2019.
2. If this dispute involves the negotiation of a new or supplemental agreement, attach copy of request made by party desiring same and insert date of request here See attached Section 6 Notice dated November 1, 2019.
3. If there has been refusal to confer, so state and give reason; otherwise, give date of last conference here May 11, 2022.

Signed at Omaha, NE and Arlington, VA this 19<sup>th</sup> of May 2022.  
(City and State) (Day) (Month)

	Carrier Official	Carrier Representative	Organization Official
Name:	Maqui Parkerson	Brendan M. Branon	
Title:	VP, Labor Relations & Sustainability	Chairman, NCCC; designated UPRR representative	
Signature:			

**Filing Instructions:** File this application in duplicate.

**Additional Sheets:** Use and attach additional sheets as needed.

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control Number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 3140-0002. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 15 minutes per response, including the time to review instructions, search existing data resources, gather the data needed, and complete and review the information collection.  
*Updated October 27, 2008*

Selected Union Pacific Railroad Company (“UP”) Agreements

Property	Agreements
Oregon Division (First District)	<p>September 1, 1989 Crew Consist Modification Agreement (signed July 13, 1989)</p> <p>January 16, 1992 Crew Consist Agreement (signed December 19, 1991)</p>
Oregon Division (Second and Third Districts)	<p>December 21, 1989 Crew Consist Agreement</p> <p>January 16, 1992 Crew Consist Agreement (signed December 19, 1991)</p>
Ogden Union Railway and Depot Co. (Salt Lake City – Butte & Granger – Huntington territories)	<p>April 16, 1991 Modified Crew Consist Agreement</p> <p>December 5, 1991 Memorandum of Agreement</p>
Eastern District & St. Joseph Terminal Railroad	<p>June 29, 1984 Crew Consist Agreement</p> <p>February 1, 1992 Crew Consist Agreement (signed December 19, 1991)</p>
Chicago & Eastern Illinois Railroad	<p>March 17, 1980 Crew Consist Agreement</p> <p>August 1, 1991 Modified and Conductor-Only Crew Consist Agreement (signed July 2, 1991)</p>
<p>Former Missouri Pacific Railroad Co. (Missouri Pacific Upper Lines)</p> <p>Kansas City, St. Louis, North Little Rock hubs and non- hub territory</p>	<p>March 17, 1980 Crew Consist Agreement</p> <p>October 1, 1987 Crew Consist Agreement (signed August 3, 1987)</p> <p>December 16, 1991 Crew Consist Agreement (signed December 19, 1991)</p> <p>October 15, 1998 Memorandum of Agreement</p>

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BRENDAN M. BRANON  
Chairman

JEFFREY F. RODGERS  
Vice Chairman

MATT HOLT  
Director of Labor Relations

November 1, 2019

## VIA FEDERAL EXPRESS AND ELECTRONIC MAIL

Mr. Jeremy Ferguson  
President, Transportation Division  
International Association of Sheet Metal, Air,  
Rail and Transportation Workers (SMART-TD)  
24950 Country Club Blvd, Suite 340  
North Olmsted, Ohio 44070

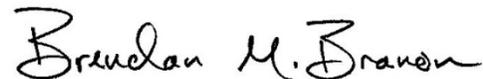
Dear Mr. Ferguson:

Please find attached a Section 6 notice on behalf of Union Pacific Railroad Company, including all its wholly owned subsidiary and legacy properties (UP). Additionally, please reference UP's letter to you dated October 28, 2019, in which UP designated the National Carriers' Conference Committee (NCCC) as its exclusive representative for purposes of any local handling of proposals regarding the size or consist of train crews, as well as any other related train crew staffing matters subject to local handling.

As the designated representative for UP as described above, and as indicated in my letter to you of October 3, 2019, the NCCC invites, but does not require, SMART-TD to handle this notice in conjunction with national bargaining.

Under Section 6, the parties are required to conduct an initial conference. Please contact me so that we can schedule a date and time to meet.

Yours very truly,



Brendan M. Branon

Attachment

cc: R. Doerr, Vice President, Labor Relations, UP

## **Section 6 Notice to SMART-TD**

For railroads, safety is a way of life and one of our guiding principles. Railroaders strive – day in and day out – to operate safely and make our systems even safer for our people, customers, and the communities we serve. Throughout our history, this mission has led to the refinement of safety-first operating rules, brought billions of dollars of investment in infrastructure, and fueled the pursuit and adoption of revolutionary technologies. We should all be rightfully proud of what has been accomplished – recent years have been the safest on record for the freight rail industry – but the safety challenge never ends.

We believe that railroads are now positioned to advance to a new era of rail safety through the full implementation of Positive Train Control (“PTC”). PTC – the advanced network of GPS, sensors and locomotive control technologies that automatically stops trains that are going too fast or have missed a signal – is the type of revolutionary technological advancement that will make our railroad system even safer than it is today.

The implementation of PTC also ushers in a reassessment of our operating model. With PTC, there is no longer a safety or operational justification to staff every freight train with both a conductor and an engineer in the cab of a locomotive. Especially in the longer haul “through-freight” service, it is no longer necessary to keep a conductor on-board simply as an observer or as a second set of eyes and ears for the engineer. The principal in-cab duties of the conductor, such as calling out signals and receiving and recording mandatory directives, have already been or will be supplanted by technology where PTC is in operation.

Railroads believe this technological revolution facilitates the redeployment of the conductor role. Outside of the locomotive cab there could still be a role for ground service personnel to play in pre-departure and final terminal duties as well as planned and unplanned

work events, such as throwing switches, coupling brake hoses, inspecting cars, replacing knuckles, and similar tasks. But there is no reason why the line-of-road tasks need to be performed by an employee who spends the rest of his or her shift simply riding in a locomotive. Ground service support for train operations can be deployed in a much more efficient manner by, for example, staging on-the-ground employees at various locations. Under this model, rather than requiring a through-freight conductor to get out of the locomotive cab and walk to where the work must be done, an employee would be waiting on site or respond in a vehicle wherever ground service is required. In other words, we can put ground service jobs on the ground, where the work is actually performed.

Assigning employees to a work location – at terminals, depots, yards, or to cover territories from a vehicle – should also have substantial quality of life benefits for employees. Unlike through-freight conductors who must work unpredictable schedules and are required to spend many nights away from home, employees in these new positions would have more predictable schedules, will be better able to plan for the work day, and will be home after shifts.

We are well aware that, in the past, SMART-TD has resisted proposals to reduce or modify train crew staffing by invoking safety concerns. Yet there is no empirical support for the notion that two-person operations are safer than one-person operations. Engineer-only crews have operated for many years in locations around the world with safety records that are equal to – if not better than – two-person crews. Europe is perhaps the best example as its freight rail industry has a long track record of safe and extensive engineer-only crew operations. The Federal Railroad Administration, which has responsibility for rail safety oversight, has also weighed in on the safety of engineer-only crews, saying there is no evidence that trains with a single crew member are less safe. But regardless of what the data show about historical safety

records, that debate is largely moot now that PTC is online. PTC technology fully replicates the safety benefit provided by a conductor in a locomotive cab. When PTC technology is combined with support from on-the-ground personnel, this new operating model will be able to handle blocked crossings and other unexpected events as well as or better than the current model.

As some SMART-TD leaders have previously acknowledged, resisting the advancement of new technology in the workplace is a shortsighted proposition. Employees and employers alike must adapt or be left behind. In order to take full advantage of new investments in PTC and other modern technology, improve safety, and better align operational costs with other industries, the railroads propose to revise train crew staffing rules and practices. Modernizing crew staffing to provide for engineer-only operations in PTC territory will help to put this industry on a sustainable path by ensuring our ability to compete with other transportation modes even when they also adopt new technologies and new operating methods. That will ultimately benefit SMART-TD's members by ensuring we sustain a vibrant and competitive transportation system and stable, high-paying jobs for the foreseeable future.

Further details of the railroad's crew consist proposal are as follows:<sup>1</sup>

1. Crew size for any train or yard operation – including both conductor and brakemen positions – shall be determined by the railroad in its discretion based on operational needs, except that engineer-only crews may be assigned only where PTC or equivalent technology is in place.
2. For any territory in which the railroad operates with only an engineer in the locomotive, there may, depending on operational need, be ground service coverage provided by

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<sup>1</sup> As noted in the railroads' national Section 6 Notice, this railroad is making the same crew consist proposal in multi-carrier or national handling as well as in local bargaining, with the caveat that if SMART-TD will not voluntarily agree to national handling, local bargaining will be pursued, albeit without prejudice to our position that crew consist can and should be negotiated at the national level.

on-the-ground positions. The work locations, duties, and schedules of any on-the-ground positions may be assigned in the carrier's sole discretion, based on operational need, without regard to any existing seniority district restrictions.

3. In the event that subsequent legislative or regulatory changes prevent the deployment of single person crews or otherwise deprive the carriers of the benefits of newly negotiated rights, the parties shall, notwithstanding any existing moratoriums, reach agreement – through negotiation or, if necessary, binding arbitration – on alternative contract terms providing the same relative economic value to each party.

4. New agreement terms shall not nullify or otherwise affect any existing carrier rights to operate with engineer-only or reduced crews.

\* \* \* \*

The carrier reserves the right to amend or modify these proposals and/or to make additional proposals to the extent permitted by law.

DIXON  
AL CHAIRMAN SMART-TD  
W AMBASSADOR DRIVE  
36  
S CITY, MISSOURI 64163

DINGTON  
AL CHAIRMAN SMART-TD  
7 28<sup>TH</sup> STREET  
F”  
A, KANSAS 66614

KALBFELL  
AL CHAIRMAN SMART-TD  
ST COLLEGE AVE  
A”  
MILWAUKEE, ILLINOIS 53172

TD President Jeremy Ferguson, with  
authorized the National Carriers’  
purposes of any local handling of  
well as any other related train crew

y of a letter from Mr. Brendan M.  
t Jeremy Ferguson serving a local  
ailroad Company.

Office No.: (402) 544-6302  
Mobile No.: (909) 341-3262  
Fax: (402) 501-2995  
Email: [RNDOERR@up.com](mailto:RNDOERR@up.com)

# R CONFERENCE

PHONE: 571-336-7600 FAX: 571-336-7605

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MATT HOLT  
Director of Labor Relations

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Yours very truly,



Brendan M. Branon

-TD

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