



Association of State Rail Safety Managers

January 24, 2014

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Railroad Retirement Board
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Chairman Schwartz and Messrs. Barrows and Kever:

On behalf of the Association of State Rail Safety Managers (ASRSM), who work in partnership with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) in the inspection and enforcement of federal rail safety regulations under the State Rail Safety Participation Program (49 CFR 212), I request the Railroad Retirement Board consider allowing all state-employed rail safety inspectors, supervisors and managers who had sufficient railroad experience to have vested in the Railroad Retirement system to re-establish a connection.

Currently 30 states participate in the State Rail Safety Participation Program. Participating states employ over 150 inspectors in disciplines including Operating Practices, Track, Signal & Train Control, Motive Power & Equipment, and Hazardous Materials. These inspectors are federally-certified and conduct the same rail safety inspections as FRA inspectors. The FRA relies on the public safety efforts of federal contractors¹ (i.e., federally-certified state inspectors) to complement its rail safety inspection program. Additionally, these inspectors enforce state rail safety rules and requirements as a routine component of their duties. Because the state rail safety inspector positions require years of railroad experience and expertise, most positions are filled by former railroad employees.

¹[Note: State rail safety inspectors, which work under the terms of a partnership agreement that states execute with the FRA, have the same job duties, responsibilities, skills, and working environment as rail safety inspectors employed by FRA.]

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It is my understanding that former railroad employees who are employed by federal agencies (United States Department of Transportation, National Transportation Safety Board, Surface Transportation Board, Transportation Security Administration, etc.) are permitted to keep a connection with the Railroad Retirement system. The ASRSM believes that those federally-certified state rail safety inspectors, supervisors and managers who accrued enough previous railroad experience to have previously vested in the Railroad Retirement system should have the same opportunity as their federal counterparts to retain a connection with the Railroad Retirement system.

I ask that you give this request serious consideration. Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter. If you have any questions, or need additional information, please contact me at (217) 557-1285 or mstead@icc.illinois.gov.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael E. Stead". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Michael" being the most prominent part.

Michael E. Stead
President