



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Railroad
Administration**

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

APR 03 2008

Mr. George Elsmore
The Association of State Rail Safety Managers
505 Van Ness Avenue
San Francisco, California 94102

Dear Mr. Elsmore:

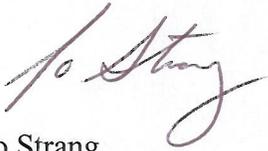
Thank you for your February 28, 2008, letter requesting clarification on the Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA) position regarding funding for State inspector travel to regional training events. It is essential that all inspectors charged with enforcement of Federal rail safety regulations apply the standards in a seamless manner. To accomplish this goal, FRA is committed to providing high-quality technical training in equal measure to State and FRA inspectors.

Our original policy on funding State participation in regional training was formulated in 2006 in discussions with your organization. At that time, I directed regions to fund State inspector travel to discipline workshops. It was agreed that regional conferences afforded few training opportunities; therefore, FRA would not pay travel expenses for State inspectors to attend these conferences. The intent of this letter is to further define this policy.

Following the receipt of your letter, I met with regional administrators and senior staff to discuss this matter. As a result of that discussion, it was decided that FRA will pay for State inspector travel to all regional discipline training workshops. Budget limitations may preclude the opportunity to conduct regional discipline workshops, but it will not be the basis for excluding State inspectors from attending these workshops. I appreciate and accept your generous offer for States to fund any in-state travel to regional training and have asked FRA regions to consider this cost-saving factor when selecting future training locations. In addition to funding stand-alone regional discipline workshops, FRA will fund State inspector travel to regional conferences that include scheduled technical training. However, not all regions conduct technical training at regional conferences.

Thank you for writing and sharing the States' perspective on regional training. States and FRA serve the interest of safety when issues of common concern are approached with honest communication. In this instance, I hope the result of our dialogue will be a team of well-trained, technically proficient State and Federal inspectors who apply their abilities in a uniform and consistent manner.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jo Strang".

Jo Strang
Associate Administrator for Safety