

November 30, 2022

Honorable Richard Durbin  
U.S. Senator  
711 Hart Senate Building  
Washington DC 20510

Honorable Tammy Duckworth  
U.S. Senator  
524 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington DC 20510

Dear Senator Durbin, Senator Duckworth and the Illinois Congressional Delegation:

On behalf of the Illinois Manufacturers' Association and manufacturers across the state of Illinois, we are writing to urge your support for an agreement between the railroad unions and the railroad carriers in order to avert a catastrophic labor strike as we head into the holiday season and remaining days of harvest. Congressional action may be needed quickly to avoid a labor stoppage that will devastate the economy and impact the lives of Americans who will pay higher prices for common items like fuel, food, and pharmaceuticals while also facing shortages of essential products.

Manufacturers have faced supply chain disruptions over the last two years while supplying our nation with essential products and are leading the economic recovery. The industry cannot afford a freight rail disruption at a time when we are continuing to struggle with supply chain disruptions and record low water levels on the Mississippi River that are impeding some barge shipments.

Illinois manufacturers employ 652,000 women and men who produce more than \$600 billion in annual economic output – the single largest share of our state's economy. Manufacturing has an economic multiplier of 1.8 meaning that Illinois' manufacturing sector supports more than 1 million jobs.

Located in the heart of America, Illinois is our nation's transportation hub and the only state in the nation served by all seven Class I railroads. Seventy percent of our nation's freight moves through Illinois and we're home to numerous logistic hubs including the largest inland port in the United States. Freight rail is responsible for moving 40 percent of long-haul goods including many essential products.

In September, President Biden and his Administration helped negotiate an agreement between the railroads and twelve unions based upon recommendations from the Presidential Emergency Board. Eight of the twelve unions have ratified the deal but four unions have recently rejected this carefully negotiated agreement.

While we are hopeful for an agreement between both parties, we call upon you to use your legislative authority to prevent any further supply chain disruption and further economic damage at a time when our nation is facing the highest inflationary pressure in forty years.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this urgent matter.

Cc: President Joseph R. Biden  
Governor JB Pritzker  
Illinois Congressional Delegation