



Transportation Division

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JEREMY R. FERGUSON
President

March 5, 2020

VIA EMAIL ONLY

Mr. Brendan M. Branon
Chairman, National Carriers' Conference Committee
251 18th Street S., Suite 750
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Mr. Branon:

I am writing to you today out of growing concern regarding reports from the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other reputable sources, reporting that COVID-19 disease (coronavirus) is spreading in the United States, with at least 158 patients treated in 17 states at present time. The SMART Transportation Division takes this issue very seriously, and we have been monitoring it closely.

As you are aware, members of the NRC/UTU Health and Welfare Plan Governing Committee (working in conjunction with the Railroad Employees' National Health and Welfare Plan and the Plans' communications team) have made efforts to inform, educate, and thereby help protect our members from coronavirus. While I am optimistic that these ongoing efforts will make a positive impact, I also fear that we could be doing more - as co-chairs of the NRC/UTU Health and Welfare Plan - to insulate our members from contracting or spreading this deadly disease.

According to the CDC.gov website, the best practices for protecting employees from exposure to coronavirus in the workplace include actively encouraging sick employees to stay home, especially if they have respiratory symptoms, (coughing, sneezing, shortness of breath, and/or fever) and to leave work if they develop such symptoms while at the workplace. As we have discussed on numerous occasions, this philosophy is incongruent with many of the rail carriers' current attendance policies, which can be described as unforgiving, at best, for employees who miss work due to illness.

If you have not already done so, I respectfully ask that you confer with the NRC/UTU Plan's NCCC-appointed Governing Committee members, and apprise this office of their responses to the following questions:

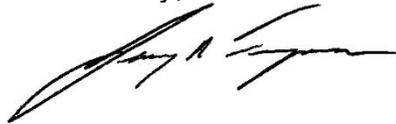
- Do the carriers plan to adopt the CDC's guidelines, specifically, the *CDC's Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)*, as published on the CDC.gov website? For convenience, I have provided a link below the cc line of this letter.
 - o If the answer is yes, do the carriers plan to relax their current attendance policies for employees who miss work accordingly?

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- If the answer is no, then what are the carriers' alternative plans or suggestions?
- Do the carriers plan to relax their current attendance policies for employees who miss work as a result of a family member, or someone who resides in the same household, contracting coronavirus or showing such symptoms?
- Do the carriers plan to relax their current attendance policies for employees who miss work because they determine that they should be tested for coronavirus?
- What steps are the carriers taking, if any, to sanitize the workplace (including but not limited to equipment, company provided transportation and away-from-home lodging facilities, and other common areas such as offices and crew staging areas)?

Thank you in advance for your time and attention to this matter. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Jeremy R. Ferguson
President - Transportation Division

cc: B. C. Leonard, Vice President - Transportation Division
J. L. Gibson Jr., Chief of Staff - Transportation Division
M. E. Dolin, Director of Administration - Transportation Division
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R. A. Scardelletti, Chairman, Cooperating Railway Labor Organizations
President, TCU/IAM
E. Conboy, Administrator, Cooperating Railway Labor Organizations
D. B. Marcus, Director of Employee Benefits, NCCC

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/guidance-business-response.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fguidance-business-response.html