



# Transportation Communications International Union

An affiliate of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers



God Bless America

**Robert A. Scardelletti**  
International President

March 22, 2010

Mr. Richard L. Trumka  
AFL-CIO President  
815 16<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20006

Dear Sir and Brother:

## **JOBS NOW AGENDA**

As requested at the March 2010 Executive Council meeting, I am writing to communicate my strongly held views for inclusion in the AFL-CIO Jobs Now Agenda.

I agree with those in the Federation who believe that a Jobs Now agenda should be at the forefront of our legislative efforts going forward

I start from the premise that our top priority must be to protect the good union jobs we currently have.

This is especially true in light of recent reports that the Obama Administration is considering going forward with a comprehensive energy bill that could negatively impact many existing jobs.

As the President of a union whose members mostly work in the freight and passenger rail industries, my first concern is to make sure that environmental efforts to curb greenhouse gases do not result in policies and legislation that will eliminate jobs associated with coal, including export coal.

I know, Rich, that because of your personal history, you share that concern. Obviously rail workers, coal miners, longshoremen, maritime, utility workers, teamsters, and many, many others all feel the same, and you're familiar with the excellent work the UMW, to name just one union, has done in developing a coal-friendly energy policy that the Administration should be urged to adopt.

***"Out of many, we are truly one." Barack Obama, Philadelphia, March 18, 2008.***

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In rail, there are more than 30,000 good-paying jobs<sup>1</sup> with good benefits directly involved in the transport of coal. We don't want retraining for those members – we want to keep those jobs, and we need to let the Administration and the Democratic leadership know that there can be no compromise on that.

My fear is that the Obama Administration will proceed with a bill that negatively affects existing jobs and then at the end of the process present us with a fait accompli, forcing labor to either oppose the bill in its entirety or capitulate on job loss, at best getting some compromise to mitigate the adverse impact.

We should not allow that to happen. I strongly advocate drawing a line in the sand saying that the labor movement will not support any bill that contains provisions adversely affecting the existing jobs of any of our affiliates.

On another front, it is shameful that at the very time our country begs for an energy-friendly, “green” passenger transportation policy, the fiscal crises in the states are leading to massive cutbacks in transit and commuter jobs. New York City MTA and New Jersey Transit are just the poster children for misguided cutbacks in jobs and significant fare hikes that will reduce ridership. TWU Local 100 faces massive job cuts in New York City transit. All the rail unions face job cuts on Metro-North, Long Island Railroad, New Jersey Transit and other commuter systems.

The first stimulus bill had significant grants for long-needed capital projects, but didn't have immediate job-creating and job-saving operating assistance. The AFL-CIO and affiliates successfully lobbied for and achieved a provision that allowed 10% of those grants to be converted to operating assistance. Many transit agencies took advantage of that change. Los Angeles MTA, where UTU, ATU, TCU and AFSCME represent more than 5,000 members, has already spent more than its 10% allotment, and is now considering cutbacks. In New York City, the new CEO of MTA is adamantly opposed to spending a dime of the capital money for operating. We have met with him repeatedly, and he is not opposed to getting separate new grants for operating.

That must be part of our agenda. What sense does it make to talk about new jobs when thousands of existing jobs in transit and commuter are on the chopping block? The state budget crises are real, and we cannot expect much help on that front. But just like the first stimulus bill saved thousands of state jobs in teaching and other state programs, transit and commuter operating assistance must be part of any new legislative priority. I know ATU and TWU, and all the rail unions, strongly support making this a priority for the Federation.

The third area I want to mention is Amtrak. We all breathed a sigh of relief when President Obama signaled an unprecedented commitment to passenger rail, high speed rail, and Amtrak in particular. Our priority is Amtrak, where there are about 17,000 current union jobs

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<sup>1</sup> The average wage in 2008 for rail jobs on Class I railroads was \$28.92. Almost all are unionized.

spread over more than 12 unions. (Most of the bidders for the new high speed grants are foreign corporations who will have to be unionized from scratch.) We were delighted when initial funding requests for Amtrak appeared to be adequate and reflected what Congress had authorized.

But now, the Obama Administration is proposing to cut that request by \$30 million dollars. We must support full funding for Amtrak's operating budget request, and also support Amtrak's long overdue, ambitious equipment modernization proposal, which would enable it to compete with the foreign companies lining up to crowd Amtrak out of the emerging high speed rail markets.

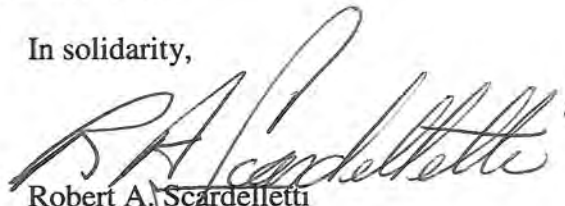
In closing, labor must be the champion of protecting our existing jobs in transportation (land, air and sea) and utility industries, as well as in the many other industries, where union members are employed. We must be one of the leading advocates of research into clean coal technologies. We must advocate federal support now for operating assistance as well as capital grants for transit and commuter operations that are currently dying on the vine because of fiscal crises in the states. And we must fight to make sure that Amtrak, the only fully-unionized, domestic rail passenger carrier, be fully funded.

While I fully support research and job creation in emerging "green" industries, these jobs do not now exist, there's legitimate doubt as to whether they will ever be U.S. based, and many of the new technologies are not labor intensive. Yes, we should encourage efforts to ensure that new jobs in wind, solar, and other "green" technologies are U.S. based and union-friendly.

But our first priority must be to protect and enhance the jobs of the workers we already represent. These efforts need not be mutually exclusive.

Thanks for taking the time to consider my views.

In solidarity,



Robert A. Scardelletti  
International President

cc: R. Thomas Buffenbarger, IAM IP  
Ed Wytkind, TTD President  
Rail Chiefs