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# MASSACHUSETTS BAY COMMUTER RAIL LABOR BARGAINING COALITION

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**UNION COALITION ON MASSACHUSETTS BAY COMMUTER  
RAILROAD TO ASK FOR PRESIDENTIAL EMERGENCY BOARD,  
AVERTING STRIKE THIS SATURDAY**

February 22, 2011

All twelve unions in the MBCR Labor Bargaining Coalition have announced that they will request President Obama to appoint a Presidential Emergency Board (PEB) to make non-binding recommendations to resolve their ongoing bargaining dispute with MBCR, the private company providing commuter rail service for the MBTA pursuant to a for-profit contract.

Under the federal law governing commuter negotiations, the unions' request will trigger the appointment of such a Board, averting a potential shutdown of commuter service that otherwise could have occurred Saturday February 26.

Negotiations for new contracts have been going on unsuccessfully since July 1, 2008. The National Mediation Board's (NMB) efforts to mediate the dispute proved unsuccessful. The parties are currently under a 30 day cooling off period, during which either the unions or MBCR could demand the appointment of a PEB. MBCR has chosen not to do so.

The labor coalition will continue to bargain until the last minute. However, failing agreement, they will invoke the appointment of a PEB. The unions are announcing that action now so that riders do not have to wait until the last minute before knowing that there will not be a strike this weekend.

The labor coalition strongly believes that the riding public should not have to suffer service disruptions of any kind when this dispute can be resolved peacefully. The labor coalition members will continue to perform their tasks safely and professionally, with the interests of the riding public foremost in



their consideration. The coalition is confident that a neutral panel of respected arbitrators will arrive at fair recommendations.

The major issue dividing the parties is whether MBCR, a contractor consortium dominated by two foreign corporations, should be allowed to withhold money already allotted by the MBTA to cover increases in labor costs and instead use that money to increase its profits. The unions' proposal would not result in any additional money having to be paid by the MBTA than it has already agreed to pay MBCR over the term of the service contract and various extensions already agreed to by the MBTA. The labor coalition members wish to obtain their fair share of the increases already agreed upon by the MBTA to fund increased labor costs for MBCR's operation of the commuter service. The issue is whether the monies allocated by the MBTA go to fill the coffers of a French corporation or go to hard-working and tax-paying citizens of Massachusetts.

The MBCR Labor Bargaining Coalition consists of twelve bargaining units on the railroad, representing more than two-thirds of the unionized workforce.

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