

# New Jersey Transit Rail Labor Coalition

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## PEB 249 SELECTS COALITION PROPOSAL AS MOST REASONABLE OFFER

Presidential Emergency Board 249 has selected the Coalition Unions' final offer in its entirety as the "most reasonable" in its January 11, 2016 recommendation to settle negotiations on New Jersey Transit.

The three member neutral panel was appointed by President Obama because of their experience and expertise. In their 34 page Report, the PEB reviewed in depth the findings of PEB 248, which the Union Coalition submitted as its final offer, and found the rationale of the first Board to be compelling. In contrast, NJT's final offer differed little from the concessionary proposal it made to PEB 248. In rejecting NJT's position, the Board wrote that "*We find that the Carrier's push to link the wages, benefits and working conditions of its employees to those of State employees is not moving the parties toward a voluntary agreement.*"

The Board accepted the Coalition's argument that the most relevant comparators were the recent settlements reached by rail workers at other commuter railroads in the Region. The Coalition pointed out that New Jersey Transit had never before pointed to state worker contracts as being relevant for commuter rail workers – and that had they done so, NJT commuter workers would have enjoyed far higher wages over the past thirty years. The Board found that "*PEBs have not accorded significant weight to state employee agreements because ... the skills, qualifications and working conditions are simply not comparable.*"

The recommendations call for wage increases totaling 17% over a six year term; health insurance contributions that will rise to 2.5% of straight time pay by January 1, 2017; modest increases in employee copays for in-network doctor visits and emergency room visits; mandatory mail order for prescription drugs; 20 minute Conductor certification pay; and a five year phase-in of Carrier 401(a) contributions for new hires. NJT's proposal to eliminate employee passes was rejected.

Coalition leaders have reached out to NJT to return to the bargaining table to reach an agreement based on the two Presidential Emergency Boards' recommendations. If no agreement is reached, a strike or lockout can begin at 12:01 am on March 13.

Coalition leaders called on NJT to end the impasse that has dragged on for almost five years, saying the PEB's recommendations "represent a fair and affordable compromise that recognize the skills and dedication of NJT's highly trained workforce."

American Train Dispatchers Association  
Power Directors • Train Dispatchers  
Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers & Trainmen • Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division-IBT  
Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen • International Association of Machinists & Aerospace Workers  
International Brotherhood of Boilermakers  
International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 1573 • System Council No. 7, IBEW  
National Conference Firemen & Oilers/SEIU 32BJ • SMART-Mechanical  
SMART-Transportation Trainmen • SMART-Transportation Yardmasters  
Transport Workers Union  
Transportation Communications Union/IAM  
ARASA Division • BRC Division • Clerical Division