August 3, 2011

The Honorable Joseph P. Szabo, Administrator
Federal Railroad Administration
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Administrator Szabo:

As you are aware, the Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008, Public Law 110-432, required the Secretary of Transportation to prepare “a report containing the results of a study to determine whether – (1) the required intervals of track inspections for each class of track should be amended; (2) track remedial action requirements should be amended; (3) different track inspection and repair priorities or methods should be required; and (4) the speed at which railroad track inspection vehicles operate and the scope of the territory they generally cover allow for proper inspection of the track and whether such speed and appropriate scope should be regulated by the Secretary.”

The Secretary directed the Federal Railroad Administration to carry out this requirement. The Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employes Division of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (BMWED) offered our full cooperation and assistance to FRA and its contractors and provided FRA with access to BMWED’s mailing list of over 1,500 track inspectors nationwide. As you are aware, FRA subsequently developed a survey and sent it to a number of randomly selected BMWED track inspectors from the list provided by the BMWED. On May 2, 2011, the Secretary of Transportation transmitted a copy of FRA’s report to the Chairman and Ranking member of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure; and to the Chairman and Ranking member of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation.

Concurrent with the FRA study, the BMWED developed its own Track Inspection Survey and mailed it out to all 1,543 track inspectors identified in the BMWED’s data base. BMWED is pleased to submit its Track Inspection Report to supplement the FRA Report and provide you with a broader perspective regarding the real world challenges, pressures and barriers affecting track inspectors’ ability to fulfill their safety critical responsibilities. I trust that the relevant and timely information contained in the enclosed BMWED Track Inspection Report will assist the Federal Railroad Administration in its work and further its understanding of the issues and challenges related to track inspection.
Similar letters have been sent to the Secretary of Transportation; the Chairman and Ranking Member of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure; the Chairman and Ranking Member of the House Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials; and the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation. We have respectfully requested Secretary LaHood to consider this report “other relevant information” as contemplated by Section 403(b)(4) of the Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008. BMWED also anticipates submitting a copy of this report to the Track Standards Working Group when that group is convened to address pending task 11-02 regarding track inspection.

If BMWED can provide any additional information or assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me or BMWED Director of Safety Rick Inclima at 202-508-6449.

Respectfully,

[Signature]

President

cc: Mr. Rick Inclima