

Division 13 Members,

The new safety agreement that passed locally at December's union meeting failed to get enough votes from the other BLET divisions on the Former BN. Therefore, the agreement will not be put into place. I do not know what BNSF will do now, but they may make it a policy. Time will tell. Please read the message from the General Chairman for further explanation.

Mike Banks
Local Chairman
BLET Division 13

All GCA 150 Local Chairmen and GCA 150 Safety Coordinators,

As all of you are aware, BLET GCA 150 Divisions have been busy discussing and voting the proposed Transportation Safety Agreement. The GCA office in Fort Collins has now received enough ballots to notify you the proposed agreement will fail to ratify based on the vote of the membership.

That absolutely does not mean that we are walking away from safety. Alongside our other General Chairman counterparts, we will continue these talks with BNSF to obtain a safety program that can be ratified by the members. It is important to remember, BNSF not the BLET, canceled the Safety Summit Agreement effective December 31st, 2021. The Safety Summit Agreement had served us well since 2002 and was truly a groundbreaking agreement. We attempted to convince BNSF to continue this partnership with SSA. It is our belief that the SSA had many successes and created a high bar concerning safety due to the involvement and participation of our members. They created a safer workplace for all of us. In the end, BNSF rejected our pleas to continue down the SSA path, and instead chose to place their commitment in a "new" safety agreement.

Where safety goes from here remains unknown. I have notified BNSF that the membership of GCA 150 did not accept the TSA as proposed. In our discussions with the officials at BNSF, the officers at GCA 150 have recommended we continue to have talks concerning a safety program that includes union involvement and that we strive to reach a voluntary agreement that would be acceptable to the members. In addition, our office has advised BNSF that there needs to be a change in the poor treatment of our members who have worked tirelessly during the pandemic. The imposition of impractical, one-sided policies must stop. A cultural shift in the way they do business is not only warranted, but necessary. Whether these comments will fall on deaf ears, or if BNSF will invite us back to the table to discuss these issues remains unclear.

Regardless, we will continue our efforts to get them back to the table in an attempt to improve the railroad we know today.

I also want to take this opportunity to say thank you to our GCA-appointed Safety Coordinators. Rich, Levi, Tim and Mike worked tirelessly to make the workplace safer for everyone. I also want to thank all of the various members who have participated in division Site Safety Teams over the years, the current Summer Safety Leaders and anyone else who made their voices heard when it came to making the workplace safer. It was only due to your countless hours spent committed to safety that the SSA program was such a successful endeavor. GCA 150 thanks all of the current and former safety participants on a job well done.

In closing, as it stands the current Safety Coordinators and Safety Leaders will be returning to the craft this week. With the cancellation of the former agreement and failure to ratify of the temporary agreement, there is no agreement in place which would allow for their continued participation in the safety process.

Thank you all again, and we will let you know of any updates as things progress.

Fraternally,

Kent