



Transport Workers Union of America, AFL-CIO

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"AMERICA'S FIGHTING DEMOCRATIC UNION"

March 6, 2024

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308056

The Honorable Martin J. Oberman
Chairman
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street NW
Washington, DC 20423

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March 7, 2024
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Public Record

Dear Chairman Oberman:

On behalf of more than 155,000 members of the Transport Workers Union of America (TWU), including railroad Car and Brake Inspectors, Car Mechanics, Coach Cleaners, and On-Board Service Workers, we strongly oppose the nomination of Justin Vonashek, Executive Vice President & Chief Operating Officer of Metro-North Railroad (MNRR) for the Passenger Rail Advisory Committee (PRAC). MNRR's flagrant disregard for the well-being of railroad workers and its repeated failure to meet even its basic obligations under the Railway Labor Act should disqualify any representative from MNRR serving in this capacity.

The majority of MNRR's workforce is currently working under expired contracts – including TWU members who recently secured a deal to “catch up” by signing a new contract that was technically expired before its enactment. Even that small victory for workers required an immense, national campaign to force the railroad back to the bargaining table and to bargain in good faith. There is no question that, were our members not constantly raising the MNRR's failure to follow the law in the media, we would have no such deal. IBEW and others are in that exact place – years beyond their contract's expiration with almost no activity from management to find a path forward. The railroad has continued to disrespect its workers daily.

Given the railroad's clear lack of commitment to its workforce and the public, we do not believe that Mr. Vonashek, nor any other representative from MNRR, would be able to provide advice in a manner consistent with the public interest. Nor do we believe he could be the candidate who would best serve the Board as a member of this advisory committee. We strongly oppose Mr. Vonashek's nomination and urge you to reject his application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "John Feltz". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping "J" and a stylized "F".

John Feltz
Transport Workers Union of America
International Vice President
Rail Division Director