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May 29th, 2026

Doug Ryhorchuck
Senior VP of Operations
CSX Transportation
500 Water St. 15th Floor
Jacksonville, FL 32202

Dear Mr. Ryhorchuck,

I am writing to you on behalf of SMART Transportation Union, the SMART New York Safety and Legislative Board and our membership at Selkirk, NY and beyond, to formally express our profound disappointment and serious concerns, regarding the safety culture that has developed under your operational leadership **and** your entire management team at CSX. The pattern of decisions emanating from your office and in the offices at Selkirk, New York, has created working conditions that are not merely inadequate, they are dangerous, they are reckless, and have nearly resulted in loss of life. The next serious injury or fatality cannot be treated as a surprise. The warnings are already here. The conditions are already known. The concerns have already been raised. If CSX leadership continues to ignore them, then responsibility for what happens next will belong to the people who had the authority to change course, and chose not to.

For years, CSX and other Class I railroads have pushed operating models that emphasize cost-cutting, reduced staffing, longer trains, tighter deadlines, fewer resources, and constant pressure to "make the numbers." Precision Scheduled Railroading may look good on a spreadsheet, but in practice, the people on the ground have seen what it often means; reduced manpower, increased workload, longer trains, compressed inspection time, greater fatigue, and less margin for error. Those are not abstract concerns. Those are daily realities.

Your men and women at CSX have repeatedly raised concerns about understaffing, fatigue, inadequate time to perform work safely, pressure to move equipment before issues are properly addressed, **and the erosion of experience in the field due to cuts, consolidations, and forced changes.** Too often, the response from management has been either silence, dismissal, or some polished statement about safety being CSX's top priority. (And I bold the above sentence for a reason)

Before I go any further, I want you to remember something fundamentally simple, that you seem to have forgotten. You have a job because of us, not the other way around.

The workers on your railroad, the ones coupling cars in the rain or snow at midnight, the ones inspecting tracks in the summer heat, the ones operating trains in conditions that would make most people stay home...those are the people who generate every single dollar of profit that CSX reports. Those are the people who make your salary possible. Those are the people who make your bonus possible. Those are the people who make your stock options possible. We are not your employees in the sense that you somehow own us or that we exist to serve your operational agenda, but rather we are the skilled professionals, without whom CSX cannot function for a single day. We are the reason your company has value. We are the reason you have a job. We are the reason you have credibility.

Moreover, let's establish the fundamental reality that your corner office and fancy mahogany desk seems to have shielded you from...**you have a job because we allow it.** Not because you possess some rare genius for logistics. Not because you understand the physics of a three-mile train or the metallurgical fatigue of a rail joint. You collect that bloated salary because the men and women with dirt under their fingernails, hearing loss from decades in cabs, and chronic back injuries from coupling your equipment, move the freight that pays your mortgage. Without us, you are nothing but an unemployed spreadsheet jockey in an ill-fitting suit, playing with numbers that suddenly mean absolutely nothing. We generate revenue. We maintain the infrastructure. We risk our lives so you can buy your third vacation home. And yet you operate under the delusion that your title grants you dominion over our safety, as if productivity metrics and quarterly earnings could ever supersede our right to return home alive. Let's be brutally clear about your personal capacity for leadership: you don't have one. You are a cautionary example of what happens when corporate America promotes a bean-counting apparatchik into a position requiring technical expertise, moral courage, and actual railroading knowledge. You probably have never crawled under a car in a driving ice storm to check a sticking brake. You probably have never felt the sickening lurch of a train parting on a grade because some mechanical defect, one that a proper inspection would have caught, finally failed under load. You are a tourist in our industry, and like all tourists, you are oblivious to the dangers you create while you snap photos of your "efficiency gains".

It is **your** specific personal decision making, that has transformed CSX into a deathtrap. You seem to have forgotten the basic arithmetic of this industry: one dead crewman costs more than ten crewmen salaries. One catastrophic derailment in a metropolitan area wipes out ten years of your precious cost-cutting. But you are too myopic...too arrogantly focused on your next bonus, to understand that safety is not the enemy of productivity, it is the foundation of it. You cannot haul freight with dead crews.

Your safety culture is a grotesque fiction. You preach "safety first" while punishing employees who report defects, because in your twisted metric, a delay is worse than a death. You have created an environment where workers fear reporting injuries, not because of the injury itself, but because they know your response will be to investigate them for "rule violations" rather than investigating the systemic failures you orchestrated. You do not care about safety and you treat our lives as acceptable write-offs.

Which brings me to the point of this letter Mr. Ryhorchuk. You had an instance happen on May 24th, 2026, where one of my members almost lost their life in Selkirk, NY. Do you know who that was? Do you know what his name was? Do you care? Do you know what transpired that night? Would you like to know what saved his life that night? Your Yardmaster. Your seasoned Yardmaster. If it wasn't for his quick decisions, his rapid actions, this letter would be structured differently. Do you know *his* name? Did you ever ask?

Are you at least a bit curious who was there the following day as well? Can you guess who was there, visiting this guy in the hospital? His union representatives were, and I was there also. Not your MTO's, trainmasters or whatever you want to refer to them as. In fact, there were no CSX officials there.

You weren't there also.

So, hear this, and hear it clearly: We will no longer subsidize your ignorance with our blood. We will no longer accept that your lust for productivity metrics, justifies the maiming of our brothers and sisters. We will make it clear to every worker considering employment at CSX that this company prioritizes profit over safety, and we will stand with any worker who faces retaliation for prioritizing their own safety. When

someone is injured or killed on your watch, and based on your track record, they will be...we will hold you personally responsible. We will ensure that your decisions are examined in court. We will make sure your negligence is documented and exposed.

You have the resources to fix this. You have the authority to fix this. You have the responsibility to fix this. This is not negotiable. This is not a suggestion. This is not debatable. This is a fundamental principle that this union will defend with every resource we possess, and we will enforce it with our labor and our presence. This letter serves as formal notice that the SMART Transportation will no longer participate in the normalization of your dangerous operational experiment. The next near-miss **may and more than likely will**, be a fatality. If that occurs, know that this letter stands as evidence that you were warned, that the dangers were articulated, and that you chose profit over blood. We are watching and we will not stand down.



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