



Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employes Division of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters

Freddie N. Simpson
President

Perry K. Geller, Sr.
Secretary-Treasurer

For Immediate Release
April 4, 2016

Statement of BMWED on Amtrak Collision in Chester, PA.

[WASHINGTON] On April 3, 2016, Amtrak Train #89 collided with a backhoe performing track maintenance work in the Northeast Corridor near Chester, PA. The accident took the lives of two Amtrak track workers and injured approximately three dozen passengers aboard the train.

“The Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employes Division (BMWED) mourns the tragic loss of life in Chester, PA. Our thoughts and prayers are with the families of the fallen at this extremely difficult time. We also express our concern for those passengers on Train 89 who suffered injuries in this tragic accident,” said BMWED National President Freddie N. Simpson.

“There have been three track worker fatalities in Amtrak’s Northeast Corridor since March 1, 2016. This is totally unacceptable and points to systemic deficiencies in the safety culture at Amtrak,” Simpson said.

BMWED General Chairman Jed Dodd echoed the concerns about safety culture at Amtrak, stating, “Amtrak has abandoned a close call reporting system that permitted these problems to be identified and resolved without waiting for fatalities, fired long-service railroad managers without due process, instituted a draconian discipline program designed to intimidate and silence the rank and file regarding safety, put safety training into the hands of trainers with no railroad experience, and hired senior managers who have no experience in operating or maintaining a railroad. This is a recipe for disaster and the blame should lay squarely at the feet of senior management officials responsible for these misguided and regressive policies.”

BMWED is fully cooperating with the National Transportation Safety Board and the Federal Railroad Administration to determine the cause of the tragic accident in Chester, PA and prevent recurrence. BMWED remains ready, willing and able to sit down with the senior decision makers at Amtrak and do the hard work necessary to improve safety culture and jointly reestablish a comprehensive safety program for the benefit of Amtrak passengers and employees alike.

BMWED is a railroad labor union representing approximately 35,000 hard-working men and women who build, inspect, maintain, and repair the tracks, bridges and related infrastructure on all Class I freight railroads, Amtrak, and a number of commuter and shortline railroads throughout the United States. BMWED was founded in 1887 and is a Division of the 1.4 million member International Brotherhood of Teamsters.

###