

New Jersey Transit Rail Labor Coalition

Bargaining Update

Coalition Unions Request Release From NMB

The ten unions in the New Jersey Transit Rail Labor Coalition have requested the National Mediation Board to release us from further mediation.

In our requests to the NMB, each union wrote: “

“... the Coalition’s proposal is consistent with all other commuter railroad settlements this round. The company’s proposal ... calls for employee health insurance contributions well above the level at every other commuter railroad, while offering wage adjustments far below those achieved at every other commuter railroad during this round... It is clear an impasse exists.”

On March 23, the NMB forwarded the Coalition Unions’ release requests to New Jersey Transit and gave NJT until April 6 to respond.

We would expect the NMB’s decision soon thereafter. If the NMB agrees to release the Coalition Unions, it will proffer binding arbitration to the unions and NJT. When either side notifies the NMB that they reject binding arbitration, that starts a process that could take as long as 270 days if no voluntary agreement is reached, including two Presidential Emergency Boards. The first PEB would be appointed within 30 days of either side’s rejection of the proffer of arbitration. At the end of the 270 days, both sides can resort to self-help.

The Coalition elected to seek release after it became clear that NJT would not make a reasonable offer. The Coalition has proposed a settlement patterned after the contracts achieved this round on Long Island Rail Road and Metro-North. NJT insists on concessionary contracts, with employees with families paying more than four times what they pay now for health benefits.

The Coalitions’ goal is to achieve a fair, voluntary agreement. We believe we have a strong case to present to a Presidential Emergency Board. In most commuter disputes in the past, the PEB’s recommendations lead to a voluntary agreement. However, unlike arbitration, a PEB’s recommendations are not binding.

The Coalition formed over the last several months after three years of each union bargaining unsuccessfully with NJT. We believe working together maximizes our potential power. 88% of NJT unionized workers are represented by Coalition unions.

This is the first of regular bargaining updates.

American Train Dispatchers Association
Power Directors • Train Dispatchers
Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers & Trainmen • Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division-IBT
Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen • International Association of Machinists & Aerospace Workers
International Brotherhood of Boilermakers • International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 1573
National Conference Firemen & Oilers/SEIU • SMART-Mechanical
SMART-Transportation Trainmen • SMART-Transportation Yardmasters
Transport Workers Union
Transportation Communications Union/IAM
ARASA Division • BRC Division • Clerical Division