

New Jersey Transit Rail Labor Coalition

NJT Unions Continue to Negotiate as Strike Date Looms

February 3, 2016... Talks between the eleven unions in the NJT Rail Labor Coalition and negotiators from New Jersey Transit continued today, but no agreement was reached. Both sides pledged to continue negotiating.

Today's talks were the first since Presidential Emergency Board 249 selected the unions' final offer as the "most reasonable".

Under Section 9a of the Railway Labor Act, which is the law covering NJT commuter rail workers, the cooling off period expires 12:01 am on March 13. If no deal is reached by then, the unions can strike and/or NJT can lock its workers out. A strike or lockout can only be ended by the parties agreeing to a settlement, or Congress passing a law to end the dispute, which both sides believe would be highly unlikely.

The unions adopted the impartial recommendations of President Emergency Board 248 as our final offer. The recommendations call for a contract averaging 2.5% a year coupled with significant increases in employee health care contributions. NJT's offer is for 0.6% net wage increases per year. The two Presidential Boards consisted of six experienced and expert arbitrators appointed by President Obama.

Coalition spokesmen said, "The last thing we want is a strike. We have gone five years without a contract. Our settlement proposal is modest and fair. All we are asking is what has been recommended by two expert neutral panels. Congress changed the Railway Labor Act to try to prevent commuter work stoppages by having a second PEB recommend the most reasonable offer, with penalties imposed on the side that doesn't accept the recommendation. That has almost always led to a settlement. Yet now NJT refuses. We call upon NJT to end this dispute without disruption to the riding public."

The Coalition includes every rail union on NJT, representing more than 4,000 commuter workers.

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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 • System Council No. 7, IBEW
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