



*A bold voice for transportation workers*

April 17, 2020

The Honorable Elaine Chao  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Ave. SE  
Washington, D.C. 20590

The Honorable Eugene Scalia  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Labor  
200 Constitution Ave. NW  
Washington, D.C. 20210

Dear Secretaries Chao and Scalia:

It has now been over a month since the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the COVID-19 outbreak to be a pandemic. The United States alone has had over 670,000 confirmed cases and, tragically, over 34,000 deaths. Since this public health crisis began, TTD and our unions have consistently urged the federal government to take specific steps to protect frontline transportation workers and their families from exposure to this virus.<sup>1</sup>

As you know, millions of transportation workers have been bravely doing their part to see our country through this disaster. They have driven the buses and trains that bring health care workers and patients alike to medical facilities. They have kept our skies open and operating in order to deliver goods and supplies quickly across the country. They have kept our supply chain running, crewing, loading and unloading commercial ships, and operating and maintaining the freight rail network that connects communities from coast to coast. They have helped keep our federal, state, and local governments operating and serving the public good. In fact, if you look at the [guidance issued](#) by the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), every single union in the TTD family represents essential workers who go to work every day knowing they are putting themselves and their families at risk in order to serve the public good.

Unfortunately, while these working Americans are risking their lives, they are being let down by their federal government. Measures that have been proven to save lives, including full deployment of personal protective equipment (PPE)—including protective levels of respiratory protection—adequate cleaning and disinfecting protocols, and policies to ensure social distancing in the workplace have not been universally mandated or implemented. Your leadership is needed to ensure that frontline transportation workers are provided with vocation-specific PPE as well as clear and concise guidance for personal and public protection. Across every mode of transportation, we have received consistent reports from workers that they do not have the proper types and adequate amounts of PPE they need to be safe and to help prevent the spread of the disease.

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<sup>1</sup> Attached is a list of TTD's 33 affiliated unions.

**Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO**

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Larry I. Willis, President / Greg Regan, Secretary-Treasurer

At a minimum, the federal government must build upon and improve CDC guidance covering transportation sectors in consultation with labor unions representing various transportation workforces. Once developed, these enhanced safety measures must be made mandatory on transportation providers with adequate enforcement actions from your agencies. As part of this effort, the Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) must issue an Emergency Temporary Standard (ETS) and enforce sector-specific requirements in order to protect workers and their families from occupational exposure to COVID-19. As the federally appointed leaders in transportation and labor, it is your joint responsibility to show the leadership Americans expect and deserve on these critical issues by closing the gaps in occupational safety specific to the vast transportation workforce.

Additionally, given the critical role transportation workers play, we urge both of your agencies to support broad policies to ensure paid leave for any worker who is sick, potentially exposed to COVID-19, or who needs to care for a loved one or family member. Remarkably, too many transportation workers do not yet have access to this most basic right and public health requirement. Moreover, as the Administration works with Congress on policies to support so-called hazard pay for frontline workers, we encourage you to apply a broad definition of essential workers to ensure that all transportation workers in both the private and public sectors are eligible.

Ensuring that these protective measures are in place, in addition to a widely available, reliable, and rapid testing program, is essential before we begin to consider re-opening sectors of our economy and regions of our country. Even a modest expansion of economic activity and increased social interactions will add passengers and density to a transportation system that cannot protect workers under current limited demand. If fully implemented and enforceable, these measures will help keep the virus in check as more people go back to work and use our transportation systems.

The frontline workers that TTD unions represent have proven themselves up to the task of serving their communities and their country. Throughout this crisis they have had our backs, despite the ever growing personal risks involved. Now it is time for the federal government to have their backs. These workers should not be forced to work without effective safety protocols and protections, including proper PPE. Without real, enforceable guidance on equipment and cleaning standards. And certainly, without an enforceable ETS that reflects the seriousness of this public health crisis. We are ready to work with you and do our part to see the country through this pandemic and end the national suffering. But we need real leadership and engagement from you and the rest of the federal government, and we need it now.

Sincerely,



Larry I. Willis  
President

CC: Hon. Ronald Batory, FRA  
Hon. Mark H. Buzby, MARAD  
Hon. Steve Dickson, FAA  
Hon. Loren Sweatt, OSHA  
Hon. K. Jane Williams, FTA



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***TTD MEMBER UNIONS***

Air Line Pilots Association (ALPA)  
Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU)  
American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE)  
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)  
American Federation of Teachers (AFT)  
Association of Flight Attendants-CWA (AFA-CWA)  
American Train Dispatchers Association (ATDA)  
Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen (BRS)  
Communications Workers of America (CWA)  
International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF)  
International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM)  
International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, Iron Ship Builders,  
Blacksmiths, Forgers and Helpers (IBB)  
International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW)  
International Longshoremen's Association (ILA)  
International Organization of Masters, Mates & Pilots (MM&P)  
International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE)  
Laborers' International Union of North America (LIUNA)  
Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association (MEBA)  
National Air Traffic Controllers Association (NATCA)  
National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC)  
National Conference of Firemen and Oilers, SEIU (NCFO, SEIU)  
National Federation of Public and Private Employees (NFOPAPE)  
Office and Professional Employees International Union (OPEIU)  
Professional Aviation Safety Specialists (PASS)  
Sailors' Union of the Pacific (SUP)  
Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers (SMART)  
SMART-Transportation Division  
Transportation Communications Union/ IAM (TCU)  
Transport Workers Union of America (TWU)  
**UNITE HERE!**  
United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW)  
United Mine Workers of America (UMWA)  
United Steel, Paper and Forestry, Rubber, Manufacturing, Energy, Allied Industrial and Service  
Workers International Union (USW)

*These 33 labor organizations are members of and represented by the TTD*

