

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

ISSUED: April 13, 1975

Forwarded to:

Mr. Arthur D. Lewis  
Chairman  
United States Railway Association  
2100 Second Street, S. W.  
Washington, D. C. 20595

SAFETY RECOMMENDATION(S)

I-75-1

The National Transportation Safety Board is concerned about the safety implications of major Federal transportation policy decisions. This concern has been expressed in Safety Board Special Studies entitled Fatality Rates for Surface Freight Transportation, 1963 to 1968, and Risk Concepts in Dangerous Goods Transportation Regulations, and in Safety Recommendations I-72-1 and I-73-1.

The Declaration of Policy (Section 101(a)(5)) of the Regional Rail Reorganization Act of 1973 recognizes the importance of transportation safety in the restructuring of essential railroad service in the midwest and northeast regions of the United States. In spelling out the duties and responsibilities of the United States Railway Association (USRA), the Act twice calls for an evaluation of the social costs associated with alternative solutions to the railroad problem (Sections 202(b)(2) and (5)).

Losses from transportation accidents (death, injury, and property damage) are important social costs that should be considered and evaluated during the development of a Final System Plan by the Association. However, none of the documents published to date by either the U. S. Department of Transportation (DOT), the Rail Services Planning Office (RSPO) of the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC), or the USRA have defined or evaluated the safety implications of the major transportation policy decisions required to reorganize the bankrupt railroads in the northeast quadrant of the United States.

Safety Recommendation I-72-1, adopted by the Safety Board on May 10, 1972, addressed the specific issue of assessing the safety impact of transportation policy decisions that will transfer traffic between the modes. This safety recommendation said in part,

"The Department of Transportation should take the lead in developing a methodology for Safety Impact Statements. These statements would be analogous to Environmental Impact Statements; they would recognize and highlight the safety implications of any proposed transportation change. They could be used within DOT for the evaluation of any suggestions for policy changes that would affect either aggregate transportation demand or the division of demand between the modes (modal split)."

The Safety Board believes that the Congressional mandate for the Association to study the effects of a possible wholesale diversion of traffic from the bankrupt railroads to trucks imposes an obligation upon the USRA to define and delineate the safety consequences of its Final System Plan.

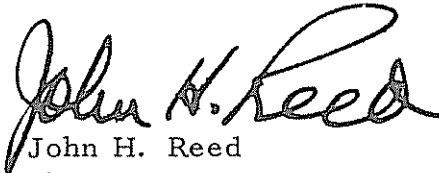
For this reason, the National Transportation Safety Board recommends that:

The United States Railway Association explicitly evaluate the impact of the Final System Plan upon transportation safety. This safety analysis should be a separate section of the Final System Plan when it is submitted to the Congress.

I-75-1

Personnel from our Bureau of Surface Transportation Safety are available if further information or assistance is desired.

REED, Chairman, McADAMS, THAYER, BURGESS, and HALEY, Members, concurred in the above recommendation.

  
By: John H. Reed  
Chairman

Copies to:

1. Rail Services Planning Office,  
Interstate Commerce Commission
2. Chairman, Senate Committee on Commerce
3. Chairman, Senate Appropriations Committee
4. Chairman, House Committee on Public Works  
and Transportation
5. Chairman, House Committee on Government Operations
6. Chairman, House Committee on Appropriations
7. Chairman, House Committee on Interstate and Foreign  
Commerce
8. Secretary, Department of Transportation
9. Administrator, Federal Railroad Administration