



Federal Railroad Administration

May 18, 2006

Railroad Safety Advisory Committee

Inspection of Joints in
Continuous Welded Rail
Interim Final Rule

Working Group Report

SAFETEA-LU

August 10, 2005 - Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act - A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU).

SAFETEA-LU (Continued)

- **Requires each track owner to implement procedures to improve the identification of cracks and other incipient failures in bolted joints within Continuous Welded Rail (CWR).**
 - Interim Final Rule regarding CWR was published on November 2, 2005, 70 Federal Register 66288, Docket No. FRA 2005–22522. Compliance date January 3, 2006, for new paragraph (g) under §213.119.

Comments to the Docket (IFR)

- **Seventeen comments were submitted to the Docket**
 - Inspection Frequency
 - Training/Re-training
 - Availability of CWR Plans
 - Economic Analysis
 - Joint Inventory and Results Recordkeeping
 - Other

CWR Working Group

February 16, 2006 – the CWR Working Group was established to review and revise the CWR related provisions of the Track Safety Standards.

It was determined that the first task would be to address the Interim Final Rule (IFR) pertaining to Inspection of Joints in CWR.

CWR Working Group Tasks

- **Review the Interim Final Rule (IFR) on inspection of joint bars in CWR territory; comment on the IFR; and prepare recommendations for the final rule.**
- **Review FRA inspection data and the pertinent accident/incident data and reporting criteria.**
- **Evaluate further enhancements for management of CWR to prevent track buckling and joint failures, including design, maintenance and inspection.**

Work in Progress

- **Data Analysis by Volpe and Working Group included:**
 - “Risk-based” approaches to establish CWR joint bar inspection intervals.
 - Fracture Mechanics of Joint Bars
 - Alternative approaches to the Inventory

Work in Progress (cont.)

- Accident/Incident data and reporting criteria for Joint Bar Caused Derailments
- FRA inspection data for trends in reporting joint bar failures.
- **Small Business Task Force**

Working Group Update

- **Held two meetings of the Working Group**
- **Next Working Group meeting will be held
May 24 – 26, 2006**
- **Complete IFR tasks by June 2, 2006**

Next Steps

- **Continue discussions on Section 213.119, Continuous Welded Rail, in general**
- **Future Meeting – July 2006**

Questions and Discussion