

Mar 7, 2023

My name is Brandon Nunnenkamp and we support SB271 I have been a Locomotive Engineer on BNSF Railroad for over 26 years. I work from Kansas City KS to Wellington KS, via the BNSF "Transcon" and then return to KC Via Derby, Wichita, Newton then back to Emporia and on occasion VIA Topeka and Lawrence.

In section 2 of SB 271, establishing a maximum train length of 8,500 feet, we are operating trains on the BNSF RR in excess of 16,000 ft, and even longer on the UPRR. These long trains create a problem for Kansas residents, not only do these long trains limit accessibility for residents, school buses and emergency vehicles, it creates a safety concern for them as well. In Wichita trains are stopped along K 15 highway and SouthEast Blvd blocking crossings, neighborhoods and crosswalks where kids and adults are trying to cross to get to and from school or to and from work. You can also see the cars speeding down K15, running red lights and going around RR crossing gates because they know what happens if they are blocked by a 3 plus mile long train. Newton High School has excused tardy slips issued to students due to frequently blocked RR crossings.

There is currently a location west of Emporia where the residents have to park a car on each side of the tracks so they are not blocked in or out from stopped trains. When this happens it requires those residents to climb up onto and across these railcars and across another mainline without the crew knowing they are climbing on the train and this is a location of newly created double main track.

I also have a voicemail from a Kansas farmer that asks the Railroad "how much longer the train will be parked blocking 160th Rd in Chase County?", he states that "He is trying to harvest wheat and the train has been there since 8:00 pm the night before, his combine is on one side of the tracks with his equipment on the other, and the last time the RR blocked this crossing it was blocked for 19 hrs". These are only a couple of the issues being created daily by these extremely long trains.

As some may know, they are finishing a huge double track project on the BNSF transcon between Ellinor KS and Eldorado Ks and also between Augusta Ks and Mulvane Ks. You will hear that this will create a continuous flow of traffic on this route through Kansas, I am here to tell you that is incorrect, as this is the route I run on 4 plus times a week, I have already seen the effects of these long trains being parked on the newly laid tracks.

The RR has done nothing to update the rail infrastructure at Kansas City, Wellington, Arkcity or Newton to assist in moving these long trains through these terminals more efficiently. What this double track has started to do and will continue to do when completed is create a whole new area for the BNSF RR to park or even store trains. You will soon see these long trains that are being staged at Augusta and El Dorado for arrival in Wellington in 2,4, 8 hours or longer now be parked between Mulvane and Rosehill and Rosehill and Augusta and trains that were staged farther back move up

and take their place at Augusta and El Dorado. This new expansion will see blocked crossings and trains parked where they never were before.

The BNSF RR also has one of the most advanced Network Operations Centers (NOC) of any company but when your dispatchers are based in Ft Worth Texas, what crossings are blocked and the inconveniences they create for Kansans just are not a concern for them.

The handling of these long trains creates other issues. When trains start to exceed 8500 ft, your train is no longer either going all uphill or downhill or partially up and partially down. Your train now is traversing 3,4 or even 5 different changes in grade in those 3-5 miles. The multiple peaks and valleys create run ins and run outs and extremely high buff and draft forces at these peaks and valleys and locomotives throughout the trains doing multiple different functions. We are seeing a large increase in trains breaking in two due to these stresses on the equipment.

Communication loss with your distributive power locomotives in the middle and rear of your train and being able to control what those locomotives are doing when those comm losses occur is also a problem.

Communication with your conductor as these hand held radios only have a range of 5-7000 ft in ideal conditions.

The air problems in the train lines and the inability for train brakes to fully release 2 miles back from the locomotive. This lack of air can create sticking brakes, hot wheels or worse.

In section 3, we also support the minimum distance for storage of rail equipment from a crossing be 250 ft. A Lot of these crossings in rural Kansas where we park trains are driveways to people's homes or entrances into fields where tractors, combines and other large slow moving equipment cross. Extending this distance can do nothing but help prevent another crossing accident.

Sincerely

Brandon Nunnenkamp