

## **BLET-Supported Railroad Security Bill Becomes Law in California**

CLEVELAND, October 4 -- After two years of work by the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed a railroad security bill into law on October 1.

The law, known as the Local Community Rail Security Act of 2006, requires railroads to provide a detailed risk assessment of each rail facility in California by July 1, 2007. The law also calls on rail carriers to document their emergency response procedures in case of acts of sabotage or terrorism.

“This bill will make the railroads in California much more secure for our members and the general public,” BLET National President Don Hahs said. “In this post 9-11 era, it is imperative that we take all steps necessary to secure our nation’s railroads against the threat of terrorism.”

By January 1, 2008, rail carriers are required to develop and implement an infrastructure protection program to protect rail infrastructure in the state from acts of sabotage, terrorism, or other crimes. Railroad employees will receive specialized security training as part of the infrastructure protection program regarding how to recognize, prevent, and respond to acts of sabotage, terrorism, or other crimes.

The railroads’ own flagging rules were adopted in the bill. Codification included the use of yellow, red, and yellow/red flags and crew notification; accurate milepost markers; accurate whistle posts and two mile speed boards.

All points of the new law are covered by "whistleblower protection" with fines of up to \$1 million. Additionally, this new law provides the protection of severability; if any entity finds a portion of the law invalid, the rest of it remains law.

The bill was signed after members in the state of California inundated the Governor’s office with phone calls, faxes and emails, according to BLET California State Legislative Board Chairman Tim Smith.

“With the efforts of several, we were successful,” Smith said. “First, I would like to thank BLET members of the state of California BLET who took the time to make phone calls, send faxes, email and letters to the Governor. Without your efforts, this would not have been possible.

“Barry Broad and Shane Gusman of CT-PAC were instrumental in carrying our bill forward,” he said. “Additional thanks go out to 1st Vice Chairman Darrel Azarcon.

“I would also like to thank my Executive Staff of Mike G. Holt, Secretary-Treasurer, and Diz Francisco, 2nd Vice Chairman, for their efforts and encouragement. Thanks also to the BLET National officers and the Teamsters.”

BLET State Legislative Boards have introduced Rail Security bills in state legislatures throughout the country.

“Congratulations to all the BLET members in California, who worked diligently with Tim Smith and the Legislative Board to get this bill passed and signed,” BLET Vice President and National Legislative Representative John Tolman.