

BLETNEWS

Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers & Trainmen

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BLET Statement on NTSB Release of Chatsworth Text Message Transcript

CLEVELAND, March 3 — Edward W. Rodzwick, National President of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET), issued the following statement today:

“This morning, the National Transportation Safety Board released transcripts of text messages involving Robert Sanchez, the locomotive engineer operating the Metrolink train involved in the tragedy last September 12th, in which he and 24 passengers lost their lives.

“The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen has always been proactive on the subject of rail safety. For more than a year prior to the accident, we actively worked with other Rail Unions, the railroad industry and the Federal Railroad Administration to develop stricter controls on the use of cell phones and other personal electronic devices on railroad locomotives.

“We have strongly supported FRA Emergency Order 26, issued shortly after the tragedy, and we also have worked hard to get the message out to our members that nothing should be allowed to distract an engineer from operating a train. In addition, our General Chairman Mark Kenny and our local officers in Los Angeles have worked closely with Connex and with the Southern California Regional Rail Authority to ensure our members understand and comply with Emergency Order 26.

“We are confident that the NTSB’s investigation will establish that our organization's actions were at all times appropriate. Beyond that, we have no comment whatsoever on the content of the text messages. Far too much attention has already been paid by some media to the personal life of Brother Sanchez, and we will not participate in reopening still-healing wounds among the Sanchez family or the families of the other Chatsworth victims.”

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Founded on May 8, 1863, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen is a member of the Teamsters Rail Conference, representing 55,000 professional locomotive engineers and trainmen throughout the United States.