



Press Release

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BREAKING PROMISES:

FDOT Reneges on Agreement, Risks Public Safety

(Aug 15, 2013 -Tallahassee) - The Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen (BRS) and the Florida AFL-CIO filed suit today against the Florida Department of Transportation for going back on their contractual agreement to hire federally certified signalmen for the construction and maintenance of SunRail lines.

President Mike Williams of the Florida AFL-CIO had the following remarks about FDOT's failure to honor their agreement, "I come from a strong background that when someone gives you their word, they follow through with it. FDOT has not followed through with their commitment to workers and the public on SunRail."

The SunRail legislative debate in 2008 and 2009 was met with strong opposition until an agreement was struck between the FDOT, BRS and the Florida AFL-CIO to ensure the most experienced and skilled workers were contracted to work the commuter line that will serve millions of Floridians. After a sham bid process, FDOT rejected three requests for proposal bids including one from United Signal, the only contractor covered by the federal Railway Labor Act (RLA) and federal Railroad Retirement Act (RRA). In doing so FDOT violated their legal agreement, risking the safety of workers and future commuters in the process.

SunRail's first paying customers will start riding May of 2014. Gus Demott General Chairman of the Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen urged that "Now is the time to build safety into the SunRail system, not when the train is barreling down the track carrying passengers."

BRS Vice President Floyd Mason added, "Rail carriers have employees that are held to high standards - standards that involve strict background checks, successful completion of mandatory training programs, and adherence to strict requirements throughout their career. This is not the case with non-carrier subcontractors."

At present, the signal maintenance work on the SunRail line continues to be done by non-carrier subcontractor RailWorks, one of the rejected and non-certified bidders.

"Florida cant afford train wrecks," stresses David Lavery, Florida Legislative Chairman of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen. "Our engineers who work on these lines regularly characterize running over SunRail as running the *gauntlet*. Railroad employees are at concern for their safety."

"The agreement was to protect the rights of the workers, ensure an effective and quality outcome and a more safe result. But fundamentally this is about upholding a solemnly entered contract for which quid pro quo was given—the state is using a bogus device to sneak out of a deal," said BRS President Dan Pickett.

The BRS and the Florida AFL-CIO are asking FDOT to fulfill their agreement by accepting federally certified United Signal's bid. "We want FDOT to show leadership and stand by their word. Florida's railroad employees and commuters deserve nothing less than the best trained signalmen maintaining their lines."