



NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
Investigative Hearing

Norfolk Southern Railway general merchandise freight train 32N
derailment with subsequent hazardous material release and fires,
in East Palestine, Ohio, on February 3, 2023

GROUP	H
EXHIBIT	
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Agency / Organization

Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen

Title

Statement for the Record – Christopher Hand



Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen

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Statement of the Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen

The following is the statement of the Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen (BRS) regarding the matter of the investigation of the Norfolk Southern Railway Freight Train 32N Derailment with subsequent Hazardous Material Release and Fires, in East Palestine, Ohio, on February 3, 2023.

Wayside defect detectors, particularly Hot Bearing Detectors, have recently gained significant attention. However, BRS and its members have long recognized the importance of wayside detectors (including Hot Bearing Detectors) in the rail industry. Hot Bearing Detectors have been in service since the 1940s, and advancements in technology have continuously improved their field detection capabilities and communication with back offices. Presently, these Detectors can be integrated into Positive Train Control (PTC) systems, enabling real-time data transmission to train crews. It is concerning that railroads are reluctant to provide train crews with real-time alerts, such as trend analysis. In contrast, airline pilots are well-informed about any issues in flight and do not rely solely on alerts from a central office. Train crews should be afforded the same level of awareness.

Regarding testing and maintenance of Hot Bearing Detectors, Norfolk Southern is responsible for determining the testing protocols and schedules. Similarly, railroads have the authority to decide the level of detail and effort put into maintaining these detectors, as well as conducting trending analysis. To prevent accidents like what occurred on February 3, 2023, it is crucial to create regulations that establish standardized practices instead of relying solely on railroads to create their own standards.

Respectfully submitted,

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