

PUBLIC SUBMISSION

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General Comment

As a wife of a railroader I feel an area of what you are classifying as "fatigue" is only in context of scheduled hours worked. Identifying the "fatigue" is the issue. Currently railroad employees are required to work in conditions that in itself cause fatigue. Switch men walking miles a day in -30 weather, at times in two feet of snow, in blizzard conditions for 8 hours a day is detrimental to their health, but with hours of service laws, employers can force these men to work in these conditions for 12 hours for 5 days straight. AND they do it. In opposite conditions 110 degrees and no wind walking miles a day. I see it every day and watch my husband struggle to walk, hold his head up, or even focus on a conversation for 5 minutes without falling asleep, right after he gets home from work. The cramping he endures is intense. And now railroad employees are required to submit all their time off with no sick days. My husband was very ill, worked 9 1/2 hours reported he had to go see a doctor when he was being forced to continue and upon his return (after he saw a doctor) was placed on a 30 day suspension for not completing his job duties. Workers are in fear of losing their jobs for reporting fatigue! My husband has been with the railroad for 17 years. No discipline was in his file. He is only 42. Currently there is no regulation to support an employee to say I am fatigued without persecution and dismissal. After 8 hours an employee should have a say especially under the conditions I noted. Not supporting the ability to have a choice after 8 hours of service is simply stating even the law could care less about fatigue.