



## NATIONAL MEDIATION BOARD WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005

**TO: Railway Labor Act Community**

**FROM: Linda A. Puchala, Chairman  
Kyle Fortson, Member  
Gerald W. Fauth, III, Member**

**DATE: April 2, 2020**

**RE: Message from the National Mediation Board**

The COVID-19 pandemic which is currently affecting the entire country is also affecting the two industries under our jurisdiction, air and rail. The Board wishes to express our understanding of the challenging situation the parties we work with and work for every day are facing right now. In particular, air carriers and millions of airline employees and contractors are enduring a temporary period of severe service downturns. During this unfortunate situation, we wish to remind the parties that NMB can be of assistance to them.

Like other federal agencies, NMB has followed the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) guidance and largely gone to telework; many NMB employees are under state or local stay-at-home orders. However, NMB is able to continue the full range of mediation services we typically provide. Our Mediators are in contact with the parties who are currently in mediation and those who have active grievance mediation cases. Mediators remain available to conduct mediation sessions by electronic means and to consult with parties who are unsure of how the current situation will affect them. NMB has video-conference abilities which we share with parties in mediation in order to better facilitate negotiations and general communications.

The Board urges all parties to continue to foster the relationships which are critical to harmonious workplaces and well-functioning transportation carriers. At a time when much is in flux, open communication about the challenges being faced will aid greater understanding of the decisions being made. It is our hope that parties currently in all stages of mediation will continue to talk by phone, teleconference, videoconference and email, or whatever format works for them, yet respects the need for social distancing at this time.

The situation facing our country and the air and rail industries and employees is indeed unsettling. We can enhance our ability to meet the current challenges by continuing to work together. NMB remains available to assist you as we continue our mission to foster productive Labor/Management communications in the air and rail industries.

The Members of the Board