



Public Service Commission

NEWS RELEASE

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State Rail Safety Inspector Receives Federal Certification

BISMARCK, ND – The North Dakota Public Service Commission’s (PSC) newest railroad safety inspector Brad Fuchs has completed all federal training requirements and is now certified to conduct inspections independently.

Fuchs joined the PSC in April 2021 and brings over 20 years of experience in track construction, track maintenance, and roadway worker protection. During his training process, Fuchs trained with 11 different Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) track inspectors across seven states, completed two weeks of immersive FRA classroom training, and completed 262 field training tasks. In total, he completed 1,728 hours of training to complete his federal certification.

“Completing this training program is a significant endeavor and we are now back to full strength with two safety inspectors working to enhance the safety of North Dakota’s rail system,” said Commission Chair Julie Fedorchak, who holds the rail portfolio.

The state inspectors are hired by and entirely accountable to the PSC. They are trained and certified by the FRA and work in partnership with the federal inspectors to supplement the FRA, the federal agency with primary responsibility for rail safety in every state. State inspectors inspect to federal safety standards and have the same enforcement authority and tools as federal inspectors.

The Railroad Safety Program was advanced by the Commission in the PSC’s budget and approved in 2015 by the Legislature along with authority to hire two inspectors. The inspectors focus on three disciplines: track, mechanical, and hazardous materials. The Rail Safety Program is funded by an existing diesel fuel tax the railroads pay, a portion of which is dedicated for safety improvements.

During the 2019-2021 biennium, the mechanical inspector completed 242 inspection days and inspected more than 48,000 units. The track inspector completed 209 inspection days with more than 4,000 units inspected. (Note: the track inspector data only represents up to Dec. 1, 2020, when the previous inspector left the position.)

Mechanical Inspector	2019-2021 Biennium	
	Inspection Days	242
	Units Inspected*	48,331
	Defects	1,912
	Violations	12

Track Inspector

Inspection Days	209
Units Inspected**	4,109
Defects	849
Violations	3

* Units inspected consist of all rolling stock. Each car can consist of multiple units or regulations inspected.

** One unit consists of one mile of track, a switch or turnout, and/or a single derail.

The North Dakota Public Service Commission is a constitutionally created state agency with authority to permit, site and regulate certain business activities in the state including electric and gas utilities, telecommunications companies, power plants, electric transmission lines, pipelines, railroads, auctioneers, commercial weighing devices, pipeline safety and coal mine reclamation.

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