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## **FREIGHT RAILROADS NAME NEW CHIEF LABOR NEGOTIATOR**

WASHINGTON (Dec. 18, 2008) – The nation's major freight railroads today announced the appointment of A. Kenneth Gradia as chairman of the National Railway Labor Conference (NRLC). He will succeed Robert F. Allen, who is stepping down after 15 years as the railroads' chief negotiator and will remain as a senior advisor until his retirement next July.

The announcement was made by Michael Ward, the chairman and chief executive officer of CSX Transportation, Inc. and chairman of the NRLC Executive Board.

Gradia, 58, who has been vice chairman of NRLC since 2002, began his career at the conference in 1984 as labor counsel and served in that position until becoming director of labor relations in 1994. In his current job, he has helped negotiate collective bargaining agreements on behalf of one of the country's most heavily unionized industries. Before joining NRLC, Gradia was a lawyer at the Federal Railroad Administration. He is a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Dickinson College and earned his law degree at Georgetown University.

He will become the sixth chairman since the freight railroads formed the Washington-based NRLC in 1963. The NRLC is a not-for-profit association whose membership consists of all major (Class I) U.S. freight railroads and many smaller lines. Through its National Carriers' Conference Committee (NCCC), the NRLC represents most of its members in national (multi-employer) collective bargaining with the 13 major rail unions.

“With his extensive knowledge of the industry and the rail bargaining process, Ken is uniquely qualified for this job,” Ward said. “Over the last 25 years at the NRLC he has proven to be an exceptionally talented manager who has earned the trust and respect of people on both sides of the bargaining table.”

Allen joined the NRLC as chairman in 1993 and since then has negotiated more than 40 agreements with the 13 unions that today represent more than 145,000 freight rail employees in national bargaining.

“Bob Allen has done a superb job in guiding labor relations for our industry both in difficult economic times and through the rail renaissance that has seen the industry grow and prosper,” Ward said. “The successful resolution of three rounds of national bargaining over 15 years with no rail strikes is testament to his professionalism and effectiveness as a negotiator.”

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