

Date April 12, 2010

**AUTHORIZATION FOR THE MAYOR TO SEND A LETTER  
TO THE UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD REGARDING  
TRAINS BLOCKING AT-GRADE CROSSINGS**

WHEREAS, trains blocking at-grade crossings within the city of Des Moines causes disruption to the traveling public, and;

WHEREAS, the Union Pacific Railroad owns and operates tracks that have, in the past, blocked City streets for extended periods.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF DES MOINES, IOWA: That the Mayor is hereby authorized to sign and send a letter to the Union Pacific Railroad asking the railroad to work with the City of Des Moines in finding ways to reduce the time, that trains block streets within the City of Des Moines.

(Council Letter No. 10-183 attached)

Moved by \_\_\_\_\_ to adopt.

FORM APPROVED: *Kathleen Vanderpool*  
Kathleen Vanderpool  
Deputy City Attorney

*SEB*

COUNCIL ACTION	YEAS	NAYS	PASS	ABSENT
COWNIE				
COLEMAN				
GRIESS				
HENSLEY				
MAHAFFEY				
MEYER				
MOORE				
TOTAL				

MOTION CARRIED

APPROVED

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor

**CERTIFICATE**

I, DIANE RAUH, City Clerk of said City hereby certify that at a meeting of the City Council of said City of Des Moines, held on the above date, among other proceedings the above was adopted.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my seal the day and year first above written.

\_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk



**T. M. Franklin Cownie**  
**Mayor**

April 12, 2010

Brenda Mainwaring  
Director, Public Affairs IA NE  
Union Pacific Railroad  
1400 Douglas Street, Stop 1550  
Omaha, NE 68179

Dear Ms. Mainwaring:

The City of Des Moines would like to address the issue of at-grade crossings blocked by stopped or slow moving Union Pacific trains. An increase in frequency of blocked at-grade crossings has been reported by neighborhood groups, and individual residents. The quality of life for City of Des Moines residents has been adversely affected by the Union Pacific blocking crossings during peak roadway travel times.

The blocked crossings raise concerns for public safety and convenience as they may provide an impediment for the movement of emergency vehicles, inhibit the flow of traffic and commerce, and we see frustrated motorists and pedestrians violating traffic safety laws to avoid blocked crossings.

As Mayor of the City of Des Moines, I am requesting that the Union Pacific meet with City staff and Council Members to discuss potential operational changes that could be engaged to address the crossings blocked by stopped or slow moving trains.

ALL-AMERICA CITY  
1949, 1976, 1981  
2003

Potential operational changes to discuss are as follows:

- New location where the train stops for crew change.
- Reduce length of trains.
- Work with customers to schedule operations at time of day that limit impact on roadway traffic.
- Improve management between the short line yard and Hull Avenue yard to assist train movements with less impact on roadway traffic.
- Other ideas the Union Pacific has to improve or shorten the duration of blocked crossings.

I would like the meeting between the City of Des Moines and the Union Pacific to occur within the next two weeks. Please contact David McGuffin, City of Des Moines Engineering Department, at (515) 283-4028 to provide your schedule to meet and discuss the issue of trains blocking at-grade crossings.

City Hall  
400 Robert D. Ray Drive  
Des Moines, IA 50309-1891  
Phone (515) 283-4944  
Fax (515) 237-1806

Sincerely,

T.M. Franklin Cownie  
Mayor