



FACT SHEET • TEAMSTERS RAIL CONFERENCE

UP's "Jobs For Life" Promise: Correcting the Record

Union Pacific's Broken Promises

Job promises do not match recent history, or the record of past rail mergers

A 50,000-mile railroad still has to be maintained and operated mile by mile.

The central problem with the UP–NS workforce story is not whether current employees are promised a job. It is whether the combined railroad will have enough Maintenance of Way employees and Train Crews to build, inspect, repair, maintain, and operate the network the Applicants say will carry materially more traffic. Based on UP's submissions to the Board, its public statements, and its recent history of steep job cuts, the answer is a resounding NO.

–22,975

COMBINED UP–NS UNION JOBS CUT SINCE 2016

–31.4%

COMBINED UP–NS UNION WORKFORCE DECLINE SINCE 2016

+1,200

JOBS UP PROMISES BY YEAR 3

5.2%

JOB PROMISES AS A PERCENTAGE OF TEN-YEAR JOB LOSSES

BACKGROUND

Union Pacific and Norfolk Southern are asking the Surface Transportation Board to approve a railroad spanning roughly 50,000 route miles across 43 states. They say the combination will convert 10,000 interline lanes to single-line service, open 88,000 additional county-to-county opportunities, shift 2.1 million truckloads to rail annually, and require 1,200 net new union jobs by Year 3.^{2,6}

UP's job promises in its STB application are non-binding. The Applicants are not legally obligated to create the jobs they are promising, and there are no repercussions if they do not. The Board can change that by imposing the job commitments as enforceable conditions of approval. As the CPKC merger demonstrates, that is the only way a promised job number becomes anything more than a projection.

CONTEXT FOR UNION PACIFIC'S JOB CLAIMS

Union Pacific claims it will add 1,200 jobs. Even assuming that is true, which is dubious, 1,200 pales next to the job cuts UP and NS have made over the last ten years, and comes nowhere close to replacing the more than 20,000 union workers who have lost their jobs.

TEN-YEAR WORKFORCE TRENDS

CARRIER	JUNE 2016 UNION EMPLOYMENT	JUNE 2026 UNION EMPLOYMENT	NUMERICAL CHANGE	PERCENT DECREASE
Union Pacific	45,250	31,017	–14,233	–31.4%

CARRIER	JUNE 2016 UNION EMPLOYMENT	JUNE 2026 UNION EMPLOYMENT	NUMERICAL CHANGE	PERCENT DECREASE
Norfolk Southern	27,878	19,136	-8,742	-31.3%
Combined	73,128	50,153	-22,975	-31.4%

Source: STB employment data, Form 1246.

THE 1,200 PROMISE AGAINST UP AND NS JOB CUTS

MEASURE	UP + NS COMBINED
Union jobs UP promises to add by Year 3	+1,200
Union jobs lost over the last ten years	-22,975
Current combined union workforce	50,153
Promised additions as a share of ten-year job loss	5.2%
Promised additions as a share of current workforce	2.4%

ATTRITION ON THE RAILROAD

The railroads experience attrition on a regular basis as workers retire, quit, or otherwise leave. Norfolk Southern CEO Mark George recently put T&E attrition at roughly 8 percent a year, noting the railroad has to keep hiring simply to replace it.⁷ Nothing in UP's merger filings indicates it plans to backfill positions as rail workers attrition out. In fact, UP CEO Jim Vena rejected the Rail Conference's request that UP commit to protecting positions by hiring to fill vacancies as people leave. That indicates UP plans to deliver the financial savings it has promised investors in part through attrition.

CARRIER	CURRENT TRAIN CREW WORKFORCE	ANNUAL LOSS AT 8% ATTRITION
Union Pacific	14,186	-1,134
Norfolk Southern	7,833	-626
Combined	22,019	-1,760

TIMEFRAME	TRAIN CREW JOBS LOST TO ATTRITION	JOBS UP PROMISES TO ADD	NET CHANGE	ADDITIONS AS % OF ATTRITION
One year	-1,760	+1,200	-560	68%
Three years	-5,280	+1,200	-4,080	22.7%

The 1,200 figure is the Applicants' entire three-year job promise, measured against attrition on the combined property.

UP EMPLOYEE IMPACT EXHIBIT ANALYSIS

The publicly released employee-impact exhibits tell a very different story than the one Union Pacific is spinning. UP admits in those exhibits that it will abolish or transfer a large number of jobs. Workers who want to keep their jobs will have to move to wherever UP decides to create them. Otherwise they go on "voluntary furlough" and lose the "jobs for life" protections.

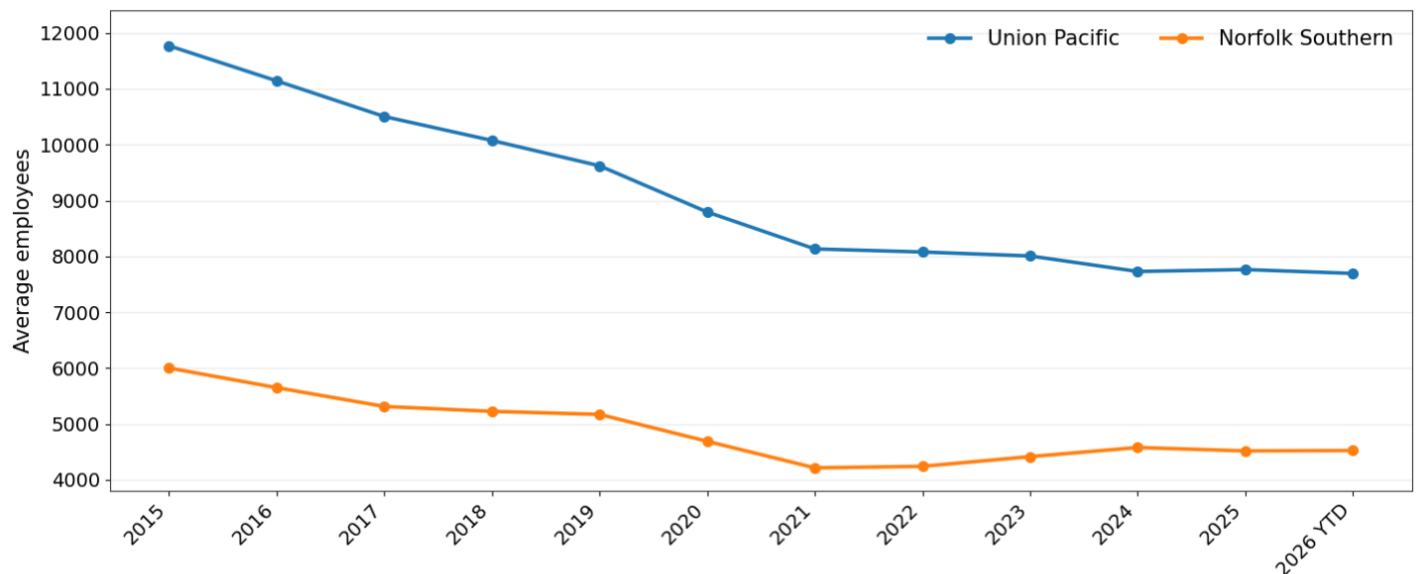
For several crafts the job-creation numbers are negligible. In the Track Maintenance classification, the exhibit identifies only 36 positions created over the first two years against 9 positions abolished, a net of just 27 additional Track Maintenance positions by Year 2, with none shown for Year 3. These are UP's rosiest projections, and 27 new jobs is a laughably low number.⁴

CRAFT	TRANSFERRED OR ABOLISHED	CREATED	NET
Track Maintenance	-9	36	+27
Train Crews	-324	1,648	+1,324

THE MAINTENANCE OF WAY WORKFORCE IS SHRINKING, NOT GROWING

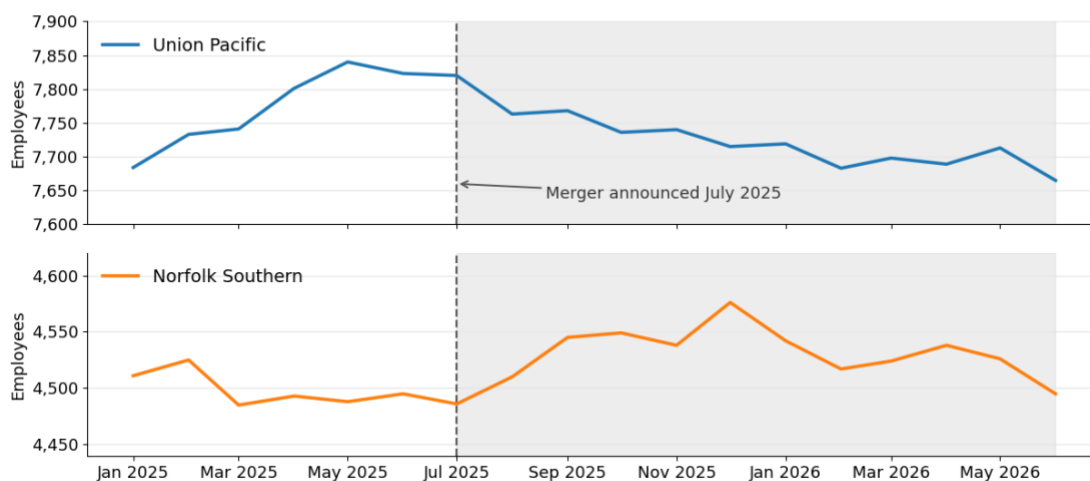
A clear test of whether a combined UP-NS railroad can carry the traffic UP projects is the size of the maintenance of way craft that builds, inspects, and repairs the physical railroad. Employment data from the STB show the opposite of a build-up: the combined Maintenance of Way and Structures workforce is roughly 31 percent smaller than it was a decade ago, and it has not grown since the merger was announced in July 2025.¹

Maintenance of Way and Structures Employment: 2015-2026



Source: STB employment data, Form 1246, Group 300 (Maintenance of Way and Structures). 2026 figures are the January–June average.

Maintenance of Way and Structures Employment: Before and After Merger Announcement



Monthly detail on the same Group 300 data since January 2025, shown on a narrower scale so recent movement is visible. Shading marks the period since the merger was announced.

The post-announcement comparison is especially telling. In July 2025, UP reported 7,820 Group 300 employees and NS reported 4,486, for a combined 12,306. By June 2026, the combined count was 12,160. NS was essentially flat, while UP had 155 fewer Group 300 employees. Whatever planning is occurring on paper, the workforce data do not show a meaningful pre-merger build-up of the employees who maintain the right-of-way.¹

THE CPKC MERGER PRECEDENT

Railroad mergers have historically led to job losses. The most recent Class I combination was Canadian Pacific’s merger with Kansas City Southern to form CPKC, which the Board approved on March 15, 2023.⁸ In an eerily similar echo, the Board expected that transaction to increase employment by 800 new union-represented operating positions in the United States.⁸ In reality, the union workforce on CPKC today is smaller than it was at the time of the merger.¹

CARRIER	MARCH 2023 UNION EMPLOYMENT	MARCH 2026 UNION EMPLOYMENT	CHANGE
CPKC	5,906	5,639	-267

Source: STB employment data, Form 1246.

CPKC’S 2023 PROMISE	ACTUAL RESULT THROUGH 2026	GAP BETWEEN PROMISE AND REALITY
+800 union jobs	-267 jobs	1,067 jobs

The Board did not simply take CP and KCS at their word. It imposed New York Dock labor protective conditions, required adherence to the 2001 Cramdown Agreement, and set an unprecedented seven-year oversight period covering the three-year implementation phase and four years beyond.⁸ The 800 positions still never materialized. Employee protective conditions compensate workers displaced by a merger; they do not obligate a railroad to hire. If the Board wants the jobs UP is promising to actually exist, it has to say so as an enforceable condition and measure compliance against it.

BOTTOM LINE

Nothing in UP’s application reflects a company planning to grow its workforce to handle the growth it claims this merger will create. UP’s filing reflects a plan to continue down the same path UP and NS have been on for years: steadily shrinking the workforce through attrition and declining to hire enough workers to keep it stable.

UP and NS have shed nearly 23,000 workers, 31 percent of their combined union workforce, over the last decade. They already do not have the workforce to run their railroads safely or to serve their customers well. This merger and UP’s filings reinforce that UP intends to keep pursuing a failed strategy that enriches the company and its investors at the expense of its customers, its workers, and the American public.

SOURCES AND NOTES

1. STB employment data, Form 1246 / Group 300. [View source](#)
2. UP amended merger application release, Apr. 30, 2026. [View source](#)
3. UP–NS, “Jobs for Life,” Apr. 9, 2026. [View source](#)
4. UP–NS Employee Impact Exhibits, Track Maintenance, STB Finance Docket No. FD 36873. [View source](#)
5. Applicants’ Second Response to Decision No. 21, Supplemental pp. 86–87, July 27, 2026. [View source](#)
6. UP–NS Transcontinental, merger overview / “By the Numbers.” [View source](#)
7. Norfolk Southern Q2 2026 earnings call, remarks of CEO Mark George on attrition. [View source](#)
8. STB, “STB Approves CP/KCS Merger With Conditions and Extended Oversight Period,” Press Release No. 23-07, Mar. 15, 2023, STB Finance Docket No. FD 36500. [View source](#)