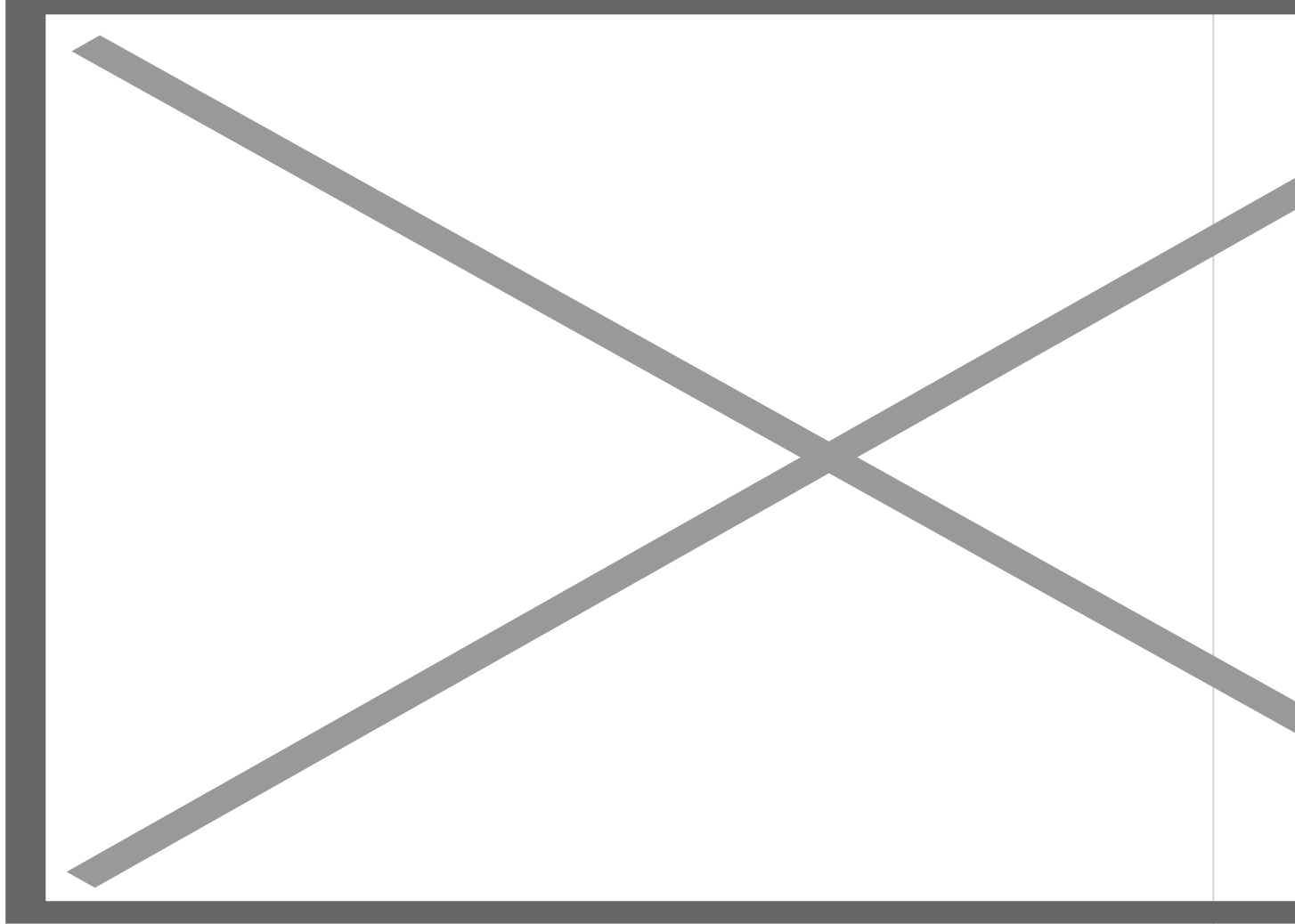


U.S. regulators approve major rail merger over objections of unions

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The merger brings the number of major U.S. rail firms down to six. It follows February's derailment of a freight train in Ohio that spread toxic chemicals across the town of East Palestine. This week, the inter-union coalition Railroad Workers United passed a resolution opposing the merger, noting that rail industry consolidation has resulted in less competition, fewer jobs, severe traffic congestion, dissatisfied shippers, delayed passenger trains and serious safety concerns.

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