

SDAC

South Dakota Association of Cooperatives

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Cooperative Value ~ Unified Voice

September 25, 2015

The Honorable John Thune
Chairman, Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation
United State Senate
Washington DC 20150

Dear Senator Thune:

I am writing to encourage your continued efforts to extend the current December 31, 2015, Positive Train Control (PTC) implementation deadline the Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008 (RSIA). It is our hope that Congress will move the PTC deadline avoiding potential and unnecessary service impacts.

Those of us involved in the industry understand there are many challenges, both technical and operational, in the implementation of the new system. Information from the Class 1 railroads and many of the short lines clearly state that despite their efforts, operational, regulatory and technical issues will prevent them from meeting the deadline. Issues including availability and reliability of hardware components and software resulting in adverse train operations and long delays during which railroads were unable to obtain certain Federal Communications Commission permits for the tower construction.

We are aware of the need for meaningful safety measures and systems. PTC has the potential to be a strong and safe system but only when given the time for proper technology development, installation and execution.

Concerns over violation of safety laws and regulations and their subsequent fines, places all railroads between a rock and a hard spot... do they continue service or do they follow the rules. We believe that railroads have a common carrier obligation to provide service, however when Federal regulations appear to impede their ability to do so, it is imperative that Congress rectify the situation as soon as possible.

Thank you for your efforts to extend the PTC deadline and we look forward to Congress taking the appropriate action and fixing this issue.

Sincerely,

Brenda R Forman

Brenda Forman, Executive Director
SD Association of Cooperatives
"Cooperative Value - Unified Voice"

CC: Senator Mike Rounds
Representative Kristi Noem