



Freight Rail Customer Alliance

September 16, 2015

Dear Member of Congress:

On behalf of the Freight Rail Customers Alliance (FRCA), I urge you today to support legislation extending the December 31, 2015 deadline for implementation of positive train control (PTC) by the nation's freight railroads.

PTC is a communications and signaling system that has been identified by the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) as a technology capable of preventing incidents caused by train operator or dispatcher error. PTC is expected to reduce the number of incidents due to excessive speed, conflicting train movements, and engineer failure to obey wayside signals.

The Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008 (RSIA08) requires implementation of PTC on railroads which carry passengers or have high-volume freight traffic with toxic- or poisonous-by-inhalation hazardous materials. Under ***RSIA08***, PTC implementation is required on about 60,000 miles of railroad track by December 31st.

Our nation's Class 1 railroads have already warned, that despite significant efforts and the expenditure of billions of dollars, they will not be able to meet the year-end deadline. In order to avoid violating the law, the railroads are **beginning to plan now** how to phase-out freight and passenger traffic leading up to the December 31st deadline.

Further, some of the railroads have indicated that they may be compelled to go further – stopping to handling perhaps all other traffic, including traffic that does not involve TIH (Toxic Inhalation Hazard) or passengers.

Such an outcome would result in chaos for the nation's transportation system and for various industrial and agricultural sectors. Numerous commodities, such as coal and grain, can only be shipped by rail, especially from certain areas of our country and/or over long distances. This disruption of rail service will have a dramatic impact on freight shippers and the customers they serve, let alone negatively affecting our nation's economy.

As the railroads are planning **now** for this December 31st deadline, the resulting uncertainty for rail-dependent shippers and the customers they serve is growing. Ensuring there is enough coal to heat homes and businesses for the winter, to delivering grains and produce from this year's harvest season to market, or to carrying forestry and paper products to manufacturers and distributors, is in question **now**.

For other commodities, some of the freight rail traffic might be diverted to other modes such as trucking. The increase in truck traffic would result in increased congestion on the nation's already overburdened highway network and the potential risk of more serious accidents.

The U.S. Senate passed a provision in its version of a surface transportation reauthorization that would allow the U.S. Secretary of Transportation to set a deadline of not later than 2018 to fully install necessary PTC equipment on trains, in facilities, and along track while also providing needed flexibility on a case-by-case basis.

FRCA asks that the U.S. Congress, as soon as possible, enact legislation to extend the PTC implementation deadline.

Thank you for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ann Warner".

Ann Warner
Executive Director

About FRCA

An umbrella membership organization, FRCA includes large trade associations representing more than 3,500 electric utility, chemical, and agriculture companies and their consumers. Through a growing coalition of industries and associations, the mission of FRCA is to obtain changes in Federal law and policy that will provide all freight shippers with reliable rail service at competitive prices. www.railvoices.org