

July 13, 2015

The Honorable John Thune
Chairman, Committee on Commerce,
Science, and Transportation
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bill Nelson
Ranking Member, Committee on Commerce,
Science, and Transportation
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Thune and Ranking Member Nelson,

We are writing to express our appreciation for recognizing the critical need to address the approaching deadline for positive train control (PTC) implementation in the surface transportation reauthorization bill.

We are the leading producers, distributors, and consumers of chemicals that are used every day to help provide safe drinking water, life-saving medications and medical devices, a safe and plentiful food supply, energy-saving building materials, and more.

As you are aware, the Class I railroads, the Federal Railroad Administration, and the Government Accountability Office have all said that the December 31, 2015 deadline for PTC implementation is unattainable. PTC is required by statute on lines that ship toxic inhalation hazard (TIH) chemicals. We are very concerned that we will be unable to ship and receive these chemicals by rail once the deadline passes at the end of this year.

More than 96 percent of all manufactured goods are directly touched by chemistry, including TIH chemicals such as chlorine, anhydrous ammonia, ethylene oxide, and hydrogen fluoride. Just about every corner of our economy relies on these chemicals, including health care, farming, manufacturing, renewable energy production, construction, and water treatment. According to The U.S. Department of Transportation, "TIH materials are essential to the economy and national health."

Halting the movement of these critical materials could have a negative ripple effect throughout many aspects of the economy. In fact, a report from the Harvard University John F. Kennedy School of Government made clear that "without the movement of [hazardous] materials, gas stations would close, crop yields would diminish, potable water prices would rise, and many manufacturing activities would come to halt."

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Since rail has proven to be an essential mode for transporting TIH chemicals, we are committed to making it even safer. We strongly urge you to work with your colleagues to ensure that a workable and reasonable extension for implementing PTC is included in the surface transportation reauthorization bill to avoid any potential disruptions in shipping TIH chemicals by rail.

We appreciate that the Committee understands the importance of addressing the deadline, which is less than 6 months away and could have serious ramifications for the U.S. economy. We look forward to continuing to work with you and the Committee to find effective and feasible solutions to enhance rail safety.

Sincerely,

Afton Chemical Corporation
American Chemistry Council
Axiall Corporation
BASF Corporation
Bayer MaterialScience
Chemours
Chemtura
Chevron Phillips Chemical Company LP
The Chlorine Institute
The Dow Chemical Company
Far West Agribusiness Association
The Fertilizer Institute
JCI Jones Chemicals, Inc.
LyondellBasell
The Mosaic Company
National Association of Chemical Distributors
Olin Corporation
Praxair, Inc.
PVS Chemicals, Inc.
Solvay Americas

cc: The Honorable Anthony Foxx, Secretary of the Department of Transportation
The Honorable Sarah Feinberg, Acting Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration