

Chair, *Patricia Quinn*, NNEPRA
Vice Chair, *David Kutrosky*, CCJPA
Treasurer, *Paul C. Worley*, North Carolina DOT

States for
www.s4prc.org



September 29, 2015

Senator John Thune, Chairman
Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation
Dirksen Senate Office Building, Room 511
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Bill Nelson, Ranking Member
Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation
Hart Senate Office Building, Room 716
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Implementation of Positive Train Control (PTC)

Dear Chairman Thune and Ranking Member Nelson,

I write on behalf of the States for Passenger Rail Coalition, Inc. (SPRC) to request action on the impending December 31, 2015 deadline to implement positive train control (PTC).

SPRC members sponsor 28 intercity passenger routes serving 296 communities across America. Last year our trains carried nearly 15 million passengers, representing nearly 49% of Amtrak's total ridership. We also contributed \$766 million in revenues to Amtrak, through \$486 million in passenger revenues plus \$280 million in contract payments.

As intercity passenger rail service sponsors, SPRC members are steadfastly committed to safety. Safety is critical to our service, passengers, employees and the communities we serve. We recognize that deployment of the new technologies presents challenges. We also agree that the roll-out of PTC must be fail-safe, effective and efficient. Collectively, SPRC members have invested hundreds of millions of dollars towards the installation of PTC and cannot risk a potential interruption in service which could result from the enforcement of the current time-frame.

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) has reported to the Congress (GAO 15-739) that most railroads do not expect to meet the 2015 deadline.

The Acting Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) has testified before the Congress that FRA is charged with enforcing compliance with the deadline, and that the agency intends to enforce the law.

The Association of American Railroads (AAR), which represents the nation's Class I freight railroads, has advised that the industry is beginning to notify their customers of the possibility of an impending national rail service shutdown. The subsequent shut-down of passenger and freight transport will inflict significant hardships on businesses and passengers alike and have a deleterious and long-lasting impact on the economy as well as upon the other modes of the national transportation system.

California
Connecticut
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Louisiana
Maryland
Massachusetts
Maine
Michigan
Minnesota
Missouri
Nevada
New York
North Carolina
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania
Texas
Vermont
Virginia
Washington
Wisconsin
Capital Corridor
Joint Powers
Authority
Northern
New England
Passenger
Rail Authority

The America Public Transportation Association (APTA), whose membership includes the nation's commuter railroads, has advised that despite the commuter rail industry's best efforts, implementing PTC nationwide by the end of this year is not possible.

Amtrak has reported to the Congress that they expect to have PTC implemented on the Northeast Corridor in compliance with the deadline. However, Amtrak has advised other service sponsors that they expect to cease taking reservations next month for the long distance national network and for state sponsored trains, depending upon action by the host freight railroads.

SPRC joins these and other respected professional organizations in requesting that Congress act soon to extend the December 31, 2015 deadline for implementation of PTC, and pledges to work with all parties for a successful and timely roll-out of this safety-critical initiative.

Sincerely,



Patricia Quinn
Chair, States for Passenger Rail Coalition, Inc.
Executive Director, Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority

cc: Secretary Anthony Foxx, US Department of Transportation
Acting Administrator, Sarah Feinberg, Federal Railroad Administration
Ed Hamberger, President and CEO, Association of American Railroads
Joseph Boardman, President and CEO, National Railroad Passenger Corporation
Michael Melaniphy, President and CEO American Public Transportation Association
Bud Wright, Executive Director, American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials
Governor Gary Herbert, Chair, National Governor's Association