



United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0504

<http://feinstein.senate.gov>

December 4, 2013

The Honorable John D. Rockefeller IV
Chairman
Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee
254 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Rockefeller:

I am writing to reiterate my support for the Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008 requirement that passenger rail systems deploy Positive Train Control (PTC) crash avoidance systems by 2015.

According to experts at the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), a properly functioning Positive Train Control crash avoidance system would very likely have prevented the deadly Metro-North derailment on Sunday, regardless of whether the over-speed event was caused by mechanical failure or human error. PTC systems would also have prevented the 2008 Southern California Metrolink crash that killed 25 Californians. In just the last ten years, the NTSB has completed 26 investigations of train accidents in the United States that could have been prevented by PTC. These accidents claimed 65 lives and injured more than 1,000 people.

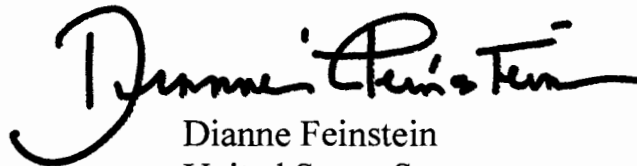
In the wake of the Southern California Metrolink tragedy, we worked together to enact the Rail Safety Improvement Act, which required PTC crash avoidance systems to be deployed by 2015 on all passenger rail lines. I am proud that Metrolink will begin testing PTC crash avoidance systems next month and will deploy PTC systems more than a year before the Federal deadline in 2015. Having experienced firsthand the heart-wrenching devastation of a deadly rail accident, Metrolink's leaders have prioritized PTC deployment. The railroad obtained the spectrum, software systems, hardware and cab upgrades necessary to deploy the system as rapidly as possible.

Unfortunately, other railroads in the United States have fallen behind schedule for deploying this vital safety technology, and they have encouraged Congress to amend Federal law in order to delay PTC crash avoidance system deployment. For instance, in a May 2012 letter published in the *New York Times*, the Presidents of the Metro-North Railroad and Long Island Railroad called for the delay of Positive Train Control crash avoidance system deadlines. Legislation referred to your committee proposes delaying PTC crash avoidance system deadlines five years.

I am hopeful that the leaders of New York railroads will take from Sunday's deadly accident the same lesson that Metrolink's leadership learned in 2008. Positive Train Control will save lives when it is deployed, and every day of delay leaves in place a 19th century signaling system dependent entirely on the attention of each train's lone engineer.

Sunday's crash was preventable. I look forward to working with you and our Senate colleagues to make sure that a similar crash never happens again.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dianne Feinstein". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

DF/mbn