

United States Senate

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June 6, 2013

Mr. Michael Melaniphy, President
American Public Transportation Association
1666 K Street NW, Suite 1100
Washington D.C. 20006

Dear Mr. Melaniphy:

I understand that the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) has been discussing the use of alternative risk reduction technologies in lieu of Positive Train Control (PTC). I am writing to express my concerns about any efforts to substitute less effective technologies for PTC.

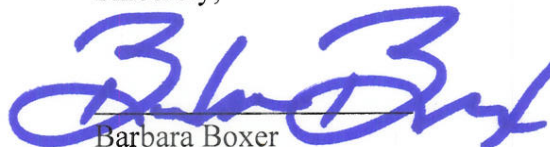
As you recall, the PTC mandate in the Rail Safety Improvement Act (RSIA) is based on provisions that I and other members of the California Congressional delegation authored in response to a 2008 crash in Chatsworth, California that killed 25 people and injured 138 others. The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) includes PTC technology among its "Most Wanted List of Transportation Safety Improvements" and reports that this technology could have prevented at least 25 significant train accidents in the past decade.

At this time, there is no known technology that can reduce the risk of a train collision as effectively as PTC. If any alternative technologies are developed in the future, they should only be permitted if they achieve the same level of risk reduction as PTC and are fully interoperable with the PTC systems that have already been installed. As APTA works to refine its policy in the coming weeks, I urge the organization to reject any proposals that fall below this standard.

Passenger safety should be the utmost concern for all rail operators, which is why PTC must be deployed expeditiously. Many rail operators have already invested tremendous time, energy, and resources to stay on track for the 2015 PTC deadline established in RSIA. Those operators who have made the effort to comply with the law should not be penalized by lowering the standards for everyone else.

Thank you for consideration of this important matter. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Lynn Abramson or Kyle Chapman of my staff at 202-224-3553.

Sincerely,



Barbara Boxer
United States Senator