

October 20, 2015

The Honorable John Thune
Chair, Committee on Science
Commerce and Transportation
United States Senate
512 Dirksen Senate Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Bill Shuster
Chair, Transportation and Infrastructure
Committee
United States House of Representatives
2251 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Bill Nelson
Ranking Member, Committee on Science
Commerce and Transportation
United States Senate
512 Dirksen Senate Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Peter A. DeFazio
Ranking Member, Transportation
and Infrastructure Committee
United States House of Representatives
2251 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Thune, Ranking Member Nelson, Chairman Shuster and Ranking Member DeFazio:

On behalf of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), which represents the departments of transportation (DOTs) of all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico, I write to request an extension of the impending December 31, 2015, statutory deadline to implement positive train control (PTC).

For the State DOTs, safety is our absolute highest priority. Safe movement of both goods and passengers is critical to the economy and our travelling public. It is also important that the roll-out of PTC be fail-safe, effective and efficient.

Through a report entitled *Additional Oversight Needed as Most Railroads Do Not Expect to Meet 2015 Implementation Deadline*, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) recently found that most railroads do not expect to meet the 2015 deadline. The GAO recommends that the Federal Railroad Administration “develop a plan that outlines how the agency will hold railroads accountable for making continued progress toward the full implementation of PTC by, among other things, collecting any additional information needed to track progress of individual railroads.” In addition, the implementation of PTC has been slowed by the Federal Communications Commission issuance of the radio spectrum needed to operate the various PTC systems.

The Association of American Railroads, 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. A recent study released by the American Chemistry Council stated that a shutdown would cost the U.S. economy \$30 billion and result in the loss of 700,000 jobs.



PAUL TROMBINO III, PRESIDENT
DIRECTOR, IOWA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

BUD WRIGHT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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Although Amtrak has implemented most of its PTC on the network it owns, most of the trains operating intercity passenger rail service on behalf of state-supported and long-distance corridors will not be compliant by the December 31, 2015, deadline due to operations over other host railroad track.

Thank you for your leadership on this important safety issue and we look forward to working with you to resolve this impending crisis.

Sincerely,



Paul Trombino III, President
Director, Iowa Department of Transportation