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November 15, 2016

Administrator Sarah Feinberg
U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Railroad Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, Southeast
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Administrator Feinberg:

Yesterday, the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) released its latest "Most Wanted List of Safety Improvements." Nine of the ten items on this list concern rail either directly or indirectly, with some tied to recent disasters affecting my constituents at Spuyten Duyvil, Bridgeport, West Haven and Valhalla – and other crashes such as the horrific derailment near Philadelphia and the recent crash in Hoboken. In the wake of these tragedies, I have been pleased to work with you and your agency to make progress protecting everyone who relies on a safe rail network. But as the release of the NTSB's list makes clear, there is significant work still to be done. As this administration draws to a close, I write urging you to finalize any and all safety efforts in the two months in which you will remain leader of the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA).

Your efforts can come on many fronts. First, you can ensure that railroads have concrete plans in place to complete the implementation of positive train control (PTC) by 2018, and that PTC is mandated everywhere it can save lives – such as in passenger rail terminals. Second, you can see through to completion the major advances we achieved in the FAST Act, the long-term transportation bill passed last year. Your agency has taken steps already to require redundant signal protection and improve grade-crossing safety, but I urge you to take immediate action on other measures outlined in the bill, such as improving inspection practices on commuter railroads, requiring inward- and outward-facing cameras and alerters on all passenger trains, and strengthening compliance with speed restrictions. Likewise, there are mandates from the 2008 rail safety law that still have yet to be finalized and need to be finished immediately, including requiring railroads to have plans to address fatigued workers. Third, you can complete action on the many outstanding safety recommendations the NTSB has issued to FRA, like the 69 specific safety items that remained open as of yesterday, including some – like improved construction standards for railcars – that were issued after crashes on Metro-North. Fourth, you can take initiative on other fronts, including advancing the use of close-call reporting systems and finalizing a sensible rule requiring two-person crews. There is tremendous opportunity for action

in the time you have left, so I urge you to take all steps possible to keep our rail system from reverting to the dangerous, deadly network of days past.

I appreciate your attention to these important matters and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Richard Blumenthal". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Richard" being the most prominent part.

RICHARD BLUMENTHAL
United States Senate