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August 22, 2016

Mr. Joseph Giuliatti
President
Metro-North Railroad
347 Madison Avenue
New York, New York 10001

Dear Mr. Giuliatti:

Last week, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) released a worrisome report revealing disturbing delays by Metro-North in implementing Positive Train Control (PTC) technology. Metro-North's work on PTC is apparently lagging – with scant progress since last year when a similar status report was issued. This technology is a critical, life-saving system that would have prevented four passengers from dying at Spuyten Duyvil in December 2013 – and more than 300 other deaths since 1970 when the National Transportation Safety Board first urged railroads to implement it.

I write to urge Metro-North to end its delays and confirm that the railroad will meet the December 2018 deadline. I realize that you understand the value of PTC, and that shortage of resources is a challenge but investment now in PTC will save lives and money in the long run.

In August 2015, I wrote seeking a date certain for Metro-North's completion of PTC. Metro-North responded that it would be "irresponsible" to project a completion date. At that point, Metro-North had failed to equip any locomotives, install any radios or obtain the necessary spectrum for a PTC system to operate. Soon after my letter, Metro-North joined other railroads in seeking a three-year extension of the then-December 2015 deadline. Unfortunately, Congress granted that extension. Still, one year after I wrote you and nearly one year after Congress gave railroads more time to install PTC, the key facts remain unchanged: PTC is operational nowhere on the 384 miles of track Metro-North operates and the railroad has little to show for the past twelve months.

The FRA's report reveals that some other railroads are similarly slow, but others are admirably on their way toward meeting – or even beating – the 2018 deadline. Metro-North should be leading the way – a model of timely, sound investment, not safety delay. The Spuyten Duyvil disaster was a red flag for this railroad, but Metro-North seems to have missed the signal, and it apparently will miss another timetable. Meanwhile other recent PTC-preventable tragedies continue to occur, like the May 2015 derailment in which eight people died on an Amtrak train outside Philadelphia and another disaster just weeks ago in Texas killing three workers when two freight trains collided and sparked a massive inferno that burned for days.

I urge you to take the PTC mandate seriously and provide me with your assurance that PTC will be operational and fully effective by the December 2018 deadline.

I appreciate your attention to this matter and prompt response to this letter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Richard Blumenthal". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Richard" and last name "Blumenthal" clearly legible.

RICHARD BLUMENTHAL
United States Senate