

Michele N. Siekerka
President

October 22, 2015

The Honorable Cory Booker
141 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington D.C., 20510

Dear Senator Booker,

The New Jersey Business & Industry Association is the largest state employer association in the nation with 20,000 member companies employing more than 1.2 million people. We have great concern about the potential impact of the upcoming deadline requiring railroads to implement Positive Train Control (PTC).


As you know, under the Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008, railroads are required to implement Positive Train Control (PTC) by December 31, 2015. The Class I railroads, the Federal Railroad Administration, and the U.S. Government Accountability Office have all said that the deadline for PTC implementation is unattainable. In actuality, railroads have stated they will begin shutting down November 1st in order to be in compliance by the December 31st deadline. If Congress fails to grant an extension of the PTC requirement there is a great risk that moving passengers and freight by rail might come to a grinding halt.

The railroad industry is making steady progress and is committed to installing PTC to help ensure that shipping and travel by rail is as safe as possible. The harmful effects will start well before the deadline arrives. Some negative impacts are already being felt as affected freight rail customer must prepare well in advance of such a massive potential service disruption.

Any interruption in the delivery of New Jersey manufactured products would have significant economic and societal consequences, including putting public health at risk. Water treatment facilities that rely on routine delivery of chlorine would likely experience service interruptions or stoppage, impacting the quality of the water we drink and the waste water we return to the environment. Many other life altering products, such as medical supplies and devices, building materials, plastics, and fuels would also be impacted if reliable rail service is interrupted.

Congress must act immediately to provide for a reasonable, workable extension for PTC to avoid the potentially dire consequences for the U.S. economy that would come with such a shutdown. The New Jersey Business & Industry Association appreciates your attention to this issue and urges you to work with your colleagues to pass a reasonable extension that will keep the trains running and will allow the railroads to successfully install PTC.

Sincerely,



Michele N. Siekerka
President and CEO

CC: The Honorable Senator John Thune
The Honorable Senator Bill Nelson