



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



2800 BERLIN TURNPIKE, P.O. BOX 317546
NEWINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06131-7546

Phone: 203-497-3344

September 14, 2015

The Honorable John Thune
Chairman
Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510-6125

Dear Chairman Thune:

Subject: Positive Train Control (PTC) Implementation

Thank you for reaching out to me to determine the issues and challenges related to the implementation of PTC and the impending deadline of December 2015. The Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) has partnered with our service provider for passenger service, Metro-North Railroad (MNR), for implementation of PTC on our passenger rail infrastructure. The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) has accepted an implementation plan from MNR that includes the territory owned by the State of Connecticut. The MNR implementation plan is part of a larger effort by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) that also includes the Long Island Railroad. The Department coordinates closely with MNR and MTA on PTC implementation and provides funding for the work within Connecticut.

There are a number of challenges related to implementing PTC that make the December 2015 deadline unrealistic. First, there were no "off the shelf" products available when the Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008 (RSIA) was enacted that met the requirements of the law. The joint effort by MTA and MNR had to initiate an extensive research and development program to design and install a system that will operate safely and reliably as an overlay to the existing Automatic Train Control system. To expedite PTC implementation, MTA based the design on the Amtrak's proposed ACSES II system that was concurrently under development.

Another significant challenge related to PTC implementation that remains unresolved is the acquisition of the required radio spectrum. The spectrum is required to implement some of the mandated components of PTC such as temporary speed restrictions, positive stop, and roadway worker protection. MTA petitioned the FCC to modify the license it acquired on the open market in order to gain access to the needed radio spectrum in Connecticut. However, the modification request remains pending at FCC more than six months after it was submitted. Even if MTA were able to meet all of the other challenges related to implementing PTC, this issue alone would have prevented them and the CTDOT from meeting the mandated deadline.

Finally, full implementation of PTC requires that the system be interoperable with Amtrak intercity service and freight operators that travel across multiple territories. Since most

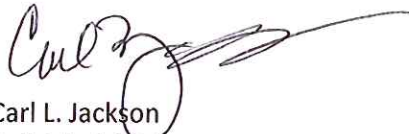
agencies are struggling to expedite implementation of a system that is still in the developmental stages, these interoperability issues are just now being discussed on a corridor level.

However, even with the challenges noted above, CTDOT is working with MTA and MNR to implement portions of the PTC system in stages. Most notably, early deployment of transponders on the New Haven mainline segment is currently underway and is scheduled to be complete by December 2015. This initiative will allow for maximum authorized speed enforcement using functionality that was built in to Connecticut's new M-8 fleet. Also, we are coordinating with MNR to implement a fully-operational pilot segment between New Haven and Bridgeport that is scheduled for completion by April 2016. These initiatives are on top of the already-existing cab signal system that includes automatic train control, ensuring the separation of rail traffic.

Despite our best efforts, and a commitment of \$112 Million in funding for the Connecticut portion of PTC alone, MNR estimates that a fully-compliant PTC system will not be functional for all of the Connecticut-owned passenger rail territory until 2018. Should the current deadline remain in effect, the State of Connecticut could be subject to fines levied by FRA for non-compliance. These fines would be counterproductive to our effort to implement PTC expeditiously, putting additional strain on limited funds.

Once again, thank you for taking the time to inquire on our efforts to expedite delivery of this important safety initiative. Should you have any further questions on Connecticut's joint efforts with MNR and MTA regarding the deployment of PTC, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Carl L. Jackson
Rail Administrator
Bureau of Public Transportation

Enclosures

cc: Mr. John Kesich, MNR
Mr. Glen Hayden, MNR