



October 23, 2015

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
S-230, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Harry Reid
Minority Leader
S-221, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Boehner
Speaker of the House
H-232, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
H-204, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Leader McConnell, Leader Reid, Speaker Boehner and Leader Pelosi,

On behalf of the Board of Directors and members of The National Industrial Transportation League (League), I am writing to express our deep concern about the fast-approaching practical deadline for Congressional action on Positive Train Control (PTC) in order to avert a true economic disaster.

The League is the nation's oldest association of shippers. Founded in 1907, the League has maintained a nonpartisan posture for 108 years and has limited its engagement on public policy matters to the field of freight transportation. Our members come from across the full spectrum of American industry: plastics, agriculture, food products, health care products, chemicals, paper and forest products, retail and more. Few issues in the last several decades have been viewed by our members with as much consternation as this PTC implementation deadline.

As transportation professionals, one hallmark of our members is their explicit focus on safety in every aspect of their work. Nowhere is this in sharper focus than the movement of toxic-inhalation-hazard (TIH) cargos. The Congress addressed the need to upgrade rail safety for shipments of TIH commodities in enacting PTC installation requirements in 2008. Despite the very significant efforts of America's freight and passenger railroads to design, procure, build and install a working interoperable PTC system across thousands of miles of rail network, the job cannot and will not be finished by the December 31, 2015 deadline mandated by statute.

Rail shippers of TIH products and non-TIH commodities, as well as rail commuters, are facing a meltdown of rail service in the weeks ahead if this statutory deadline is not extended. Railroads are now informing their customers that plans are underway to clear their systems of any TIH product by embargoing acceptance of TIH commodities beginning as early as next month. Also being mapped is the shutdown of major segments of rail lines. The economic impact on League member companies and tens of thousands of other companies that rely on rail transportation will be devastating. The calculus is simple and straightforward: if these products cannot be moved out of American plants to waiting customers in factories, farms and water purification systems, the only choice is to shut down and lay off workers.

As a practical matter, the resolution of this problem cannot wait until December. The Congress has an opportunity now to prevent this disaster. On Thursday October 22nd, the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee adopted a bipartisan compromise worked out by staff from committees of jurisdiction in the Senate and House that sets a new PTC implementation deadline, exerts pressure to complete the remaining work, establishes meaningful requirements for performance metrics and gives the Department of Transportation appropriate latitude to work with the responsible railroads to achieve full PTC implementation. What remains is Congressional action to enact this compromise into law.

When legislation to extend the surface transportation authorization is considered this month, we strongly urge you to lead your respective colleagues to adopt this thoughtful and workable compromise to extend the PTC implementation deadline.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bruce Carlton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "B" and "C".

Bruce Carlton
President & CEO