

October 2, 2015

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS:

The undersigned organizations representing American farmers, manufacturers, retailers, energy providers and other freight rail customers are concerned that large portions of the American rail network will be forced to shut down at year's end without Congressional action to extend the deadline for the rail industry to fully implement Positive Train Control (PTC). All of our organizations fully support PTC implementation, but the reality is that significant hurdles make it virtually impossible to bring PTC fully on line nationwide to meet the regulatory deadline. We urge Congress to act expeditiously to avert the potentially catastrophic shut down of the American rail network.

The threat of a rail service shutdown is very real.

Information from the Government Accountability Office, the Federal Railroad Administration and the railroads demonstrates that no Class I freight railroad will be in compliance with PTC requirements by December 31, 2015. To date, no Class I railroad has committed to continuing to carry freight traffic after December 31. In fact, some railroads have informed customers and policy makers that they may completely cease operations unless Congress extends the deadline. In recent letters to Senate Commerce Committee Chairman John Thune, all Class I railroads offer a very stark outlook on the anticipated operating status of freight and passenger services at the end of the calendar year and beyond if a PTC deadline is not extended by Congress. Impacts will begin to be felt well in advance of the December deadline as railroads and customers soon begin preparations for that process.

A shutdown of large segments of the nation's freight rail network would have broad and long lasting consequences. As rail customers, we rely on railroads to deliver farm products, automobiles, coal, heating oil, propane, road salt, chemicals, consumer goods, building materials and many other essential products. A major disruption of freight service would have cascading impacts on food, energy and water supplies, as well as transportation, construction and nearly every sector of the U.S. economy.

The rail system is interwoven into the fabric of the American economy and cannot be simply switched off once the deadline is hit. Railroad and freight rail customers are already making decisions about post-shutdown operations. The economic consequences have already begun to be felt and will continue to grow throughout the fall and winter, and well into the New Year.

However, no amount of preparation will be sufficient to prevent widespread and long-lasting harm in the event of a rail shutdown. This issue cannot await further delay, and we urge Congress to act. We believe that H.R. 3651, the "Positive Train Control Enforcement and Implementation Act of 2015," and the PTC-related provisions of the Senate-passed surface transportation reauthorization bill, H.R. 22, the "DRIVE Act," are important paths towards addressing this issue.

Railroads, rail shippers and all stakeholders need Congress to pass legislation that will ensure that rail service will not be disrupted as a result of the PTC implementation deadline. Our organizations support PTC full implementation. We urge Congress to ensure PTC is implemented on a workable timetable that will allow the railroads to install this complex technology and that prevents a nationwide rail service shutdown.

Sincerely,

Agricultural Retailers Association  
Agriculture Transportation Coalition  
Airforwarders Association  
Alliance for Rail Competition  
Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers  
Almond Hullers & Processors Association  
American Apparel & Footwear Association  
American Chemistry Council  
American Coatings Association, Inc.  
American Cotton Shippers Association  
American Farm Bureau Federation  
American Forest and Paper Association  
American Foundry Society  
American Frozen Food Institute  
American Fuel & Petrochemical Manufacturers  
American Import Shippers Association  
American Iron and Steel Institute  
American Malting Barley Association  
American Pyrotechnics Association  
American Soybean Association  
Association of Food Industries  
Auto Care Association  
California Farm Bureau Federation  
California League of Food Processors  
Colorado Association of Wheat Growers  
Corn Refiners Association  
Council on Safe Transportation of Hazardous Articles  
Fashion Accessories Shippers Association  
Footwear Distributors & Retailers of America  
Foreign Trade Association  
Foundry Association of Michigan  
Freight Rail Customer Alliance  
Gemini Shippers Association  
Global Automakers  
Grocery Manufacturers Association  
Idaho Barley Commission  
Idaho Grain Producers Association  
Idaho Wheat Commission

Indiana Cast Metals Association  
Institute of Makers of Explosives  
Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries, Inc.  
Intermodal Association of North America  
International Association of Movers  
International Vessel Operators Dangerous Goods Association  
International Warehouse Logistics Association  
Louisiana Chemical Association  
Manufacture Alabama  
Meat Import Council of America  
Midwest Shippers Association  
Montana Farmers Union  
National Association of Chemical Distributors  
National Association of Manufacturers  
National Association of Wheat Growers  
National Cattlemen's Beef Association  
National Chicken Council  
National Corn Growers Association  
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives  
National Customs Brokers and Forwarders Association of America  
National Farmers Union  
National Grain and Feed Association  
National Mining Association  
National Oilseed Processors Association  
National Onion Association  
National Pork Producers Council  
National Potato Council  
National Propane Gas Association  
National Retail Federation  
National Shippers Strategic Transportation Council  
Nebraska Soybean Association  
Nebraska Wheat Board  
Nevada Mining Association  
New York/New Jersey Foreign Freight Forwarders and Brokers Association  
North American Home Furnishings Association  
North American Meat Institute  
Ohio Cast Metals Association  
Oregon Wheat Commission  
Pennsylvania Foundry Association  
Promotional Products Association International  
Resilient Floor Covering Institute  
Retail Industry Leaders Association  
San Gabriel Valley Economic Partnership  
Snack Food Association  
Society of Chemical Manufacturers and Affiliates  
Steel Manufacturers Association

Texas Cast Metals Association  
Texas Wheat Producers Board  
The Chlorine Institute  
The Fertilizer Institute  
The National Industrial Transportation League  
The Vinyl Institute  
Transportation Intermediaries Association  
Travel Goods Association  
U.S. Apple Association  
U.S. Chamber of Commerce  
U.S. Hide, Skin and Leather Association  
U.S. Pea and Lentil Trade Association  
USA Dry Pea and Lentil Council  
Vinyl Building Council  
Vinyl Siding Institute  
Washington Association of Wheat Growers  
Washington Farm Bureau  
Washington Grain Commission  
Washington State Potato Commission  
Western Fuels Association  
Wisconsin Cast Metals Association  
Wyoming Wheat Marketing Commission