

**Testimony of Kevin Corbett
Executive Director, NJ TRANSIT
U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and
Transportation**

October 3, 2018

- Good morning, Chairman Thune and members of the Committee. Thank you for providing this opportunity to speak on the important safety enhancement of Positive Train Control and NJ TRANSIT's PTC implementation program.
- NJ TRANSIT is the nation's largest statewide public transportation system. We provide more than 944,000 weekday trips on 251 bus routes, three light rail lines, 12 commuter rail lines, and through Access Link paratransit service.
- We are the third largest transit system in the country with 165 rail stations, 62 light rail stations, and more than 18,000 bus stops linking major points in New Jersey, New York, and Philadelphia.
- The Positive Train Control challenges that NJ TRANSIT faces today were years in the making -- to be blunt, they reflect years of inattentiveness to implementing PTC.
- But let me be clear – the single, most critical mission we have at NJ TRANSIT is to complete the installation of Positive Train Control and to meet our Federal requirements by December 31st. We are fully and absolutely committed to doing everything possible in order to meet the deadline.

- What I found when I arrived in February was that seven years had elapsed since NJ TRANSIT awarded a contract to install PTC.
- NJ TRANSIT entered into a contract in 2011 with our vendor for vehicle equipment installation to be complete by 2015.
- Yet – by the end of 2017 – the contractor had finished equipping only 35 locomotives and cab cars.
- Just 35 in all those years.
- Up until 2014 – NJ TRANSIT had just a single full-time employee assigned to PTC. From 2014 to 2016, there were only four employees assigned full time to the project.
- This was not nearly enough to meet a mission critical Federal deadline.
- So when I came to NJ TRANSIT the program was at just 12 percent completion.
- I am pleased to report that in the past seven months we have turned that around and achieved very real progress.
- We're now over 70 percent complete toward meeting the December 31, 2018 requirements to qualify for an alternative schedule under the PTC law.
- And for that, I also want to thank Mr. Batory and his staff at the Federal Railroad Administration for their technical help and guidance.
- That said, we are still fighting that legacy of starting out the year being far behind in the implementation of PTC.

- Meanwhile, we also face the challenges of contractor capacity and availability of materials and supplies, challenges that we have heard also affect many other railroads across the country.
- And we are challenged simultaneously by a shortage of locomotive engineers. This situation was allowed to develop over that same period at NJ TRANSIT from 2011 through 2017. Engineers are critical to making the equipment moves needed to accomplish the PTC mission, while also running our nearly 700 trains each weekday.
- The confluence of these challenges – complex PTC installation, contractor and supply constraints, and a depleted locomotive engineering bench – has resulted in a large number of train cancellations in recent months, and I know these have had a significant impact on our customers.
- But I believe that times of great challenge are also times of great opportunity.
- Although NJ TRANSIT will not receive full PTC certification until the end of 2020, we are working diligently to qualify for an alternative schedule.
- We are working to achieve this by:
 - Installing all necessary PTC equipment by the end of this year;
 - Training all necessary employees this year; and
 - Continuing substantial field and other testing.

- These tests are laying the groundwork for beginning Revenue Service Demonstration.
- As of Sunday, September 30, we have gotten 160 locomotives and cab cars PTC-equipped.
- We have 82 percent of all required wayside antennas, radios, and other equipment installed on the railroad rights-of-way.
- And we've trained 99 percent of all the engineers, signal technicians and others who need to be PTC-trained.

Progress Toward Key Year-End Targets

Program Area		Target by Dec. 31, 2018	Realized Quantities		Remaining Quantities
			Mar. 31, 2018	Sept. 30, 2018	
Vehicle Installations		282	35	160	122
Wayside Installation	Wayside interface units	119	54	108	11
	Poles	111	43	103	8
	Antennas	111	37	93	18
Aggregate Training		823	172	1,394	8*

* Although we've exceeded our target of 823 employees trained, there are still 8 dispatchers that must be trained by year end.

- Achieving this progress has required a number of significant actions, from increasing the labor forces at our installation facilities to making difficult rail service adjustments so that locomotives and cab control cars are available for PTC equipment installation.

- The result has been that we've accomplished more in the last seven months, than in the previous seven years.
- There is much, much more to do. Failure to meet our required numbers by December 31st is NOT an option.
- Make no mistake; we are all aware of the serious consequences to NJ TRANSIT if we do not achieve these goals – including FRA daily fines, and restrictions on our ability to operate on Amtrak's Northeast Corridor.
- I should note, we are working closely with Amtrak to ensure NEC operations continue while NJ TRANSIT moves toward full system certification to be completed by the end of 2020. In fact, in partnership with Amtrak, we will begin testing our systems on the NEC this month.
- We have made and continue to make significant changes to service to allow us to meet our Federal requirements by the end of the year – despite their very real disruption to the lives of our customers.
- So far we have reduced rail service twice, including the temporary suspension of service on the entire Atlantic City Rail Line.
- And -- we have further service reductions going into effect on October 14th.
- Making these types of service adjustments is not a decision I take lightly – but they have been among those steps we've had to take to meet our PTC milestones.

- These service changes allow for the cycling of locomotives and cab control cars throughout the system to our three installation facilities, then on to testing at other locations, and then back into service.
- This is a complex logistical ballet, and it significantly reduces the rail vehicles available for daily service. And it means some of the already-depleted locomotive engineering force must be diverted to complete PTC car movements.
- I want to stress to our customers that when we complete our PTC installations we will begin to reintroduce these regular rail services.
- To sum up, we have made significant progress since the start of the year, and we continue working to meet the milestones still in front of us in order to reach our December 31st requirements and the 2020 schedule.
- Chairman Thune and members of the Committee, thank you for providing me the opportunity to discuss these matters with you today.
- Now I am happy to take your questions.