



Freight Rail Customer Alliance

Positive Train Control Implementation of Surface Transportation Extension Act

FRCA Position

FRCA continues to support the railroad industry's efforts to implement Positive Train Control (PTC) systems by Dec 31, 2018 – or alternative schedules up to Dec 31, 2020 – as approved by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA).

Issue Background

The *Surface Transportation Extension Act of 2015*, H.R. 3819, was signed into law (P.L. 114-73) on October 29, 2015.

The law provides railroads an extension — until at least Dec. 31, 2018 — to implement PTC systems. The U.S. Department of Transportation is allowed to extend the deadline for as long as two additional years (Dec 31, 2020) in some cases and be permitted to approve implementation in phases. A 2008 rail safety law, P.L. 110-432, required many freight and passenger railroads to develop plans for implementing a PTC system by Dec 31, 2015.

PTC systems use communications and signaling technology to prevent accidents caused by excessive speed, train-on-train collisions and incorrect routing. The National Transportation Safety Board publicly stated that PTC technology would have prevented the fatal Amtrak derailment in Philadelphia on May 12, 2015.

With the December 31, 2015 deadline approaching, the nation's Class 1 railroads warned, that despite significant efforts and the expenditure of billions of dollars, they would not be able to meet the year-end deadline. To avoid violating the law, the railroads announced plans to phase-out freight and passenger traffic leading up to the December 31, 2015 deadline.

This would have resulted in chaos for the nation's transportation system and for various industrial and agricultural sectors. Numerous commodities, such as coal and grain, can only be shipped by rail, especially from certain areas of our country and/or over long distances. This disruption of rail service would have had a dramatic impact on freight shippers and the customers they serve, let alone negatively affecting our nation's economy.

FRCA joined with the railroads and other industry stakeholders urging the U.S. Congress to extend the PTC implementation deadline and to do so well ahead of the original December 31, 2015 deadline.

Status

2019 FRA quarterly status reports can be accessed via <https://www.fra.dot.gov/ptc>

On Dec 31, 2018 the FRA announced that that all 41 railroads met the PTC implementation deadline as required by P.L. 114-73. The FRA statement can be accessed via:

https://www.transportation.gov/briefing-room/statement-positive-train-control-implementation?utm_source=Eno+Mailing+List+%28Segmented%29&utm_campaign=47ea895046-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2018_03_20_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_d0d2629f55-47ea895046-357756829