



October 2, 2015

The Honorable Bill Shuster
Chairman
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jeff Denham
Chairman
Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines and
Hazardous Materials
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Peter DeFazio
Ranking Member
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Michael Capuano
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines and
Hazardous Materials
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives,

We, the undersigned water associations, urge you to vote for H.R. 3651 the *Positive Train Control Enforcement and Implementation Act of 2015*. Most U.S. railroads are unable to fully implement positive train control (PTC) by the current December 31 deadline and this extension is needed to ensure the deliveries of chlorine and anhydrous ammonia used to treat municipal drinking water and wastewater are not disrupted.

Water utilities rely on these materials to make tap water safe to drink and to make wastewater safe for the environment. A failure to extend the PTC deadline could therefore have grave consequences. Chlorine and anhydrous ammonia – critical substances in water disinfection – are typically transported by rail from manufacturing facilities to distribution or repackaging centers before continuing on to water utilities by rail or by truck. The supply chain will obviously break down if the initial rail shipments of these chemicals are halted.

To be clear, the water sector supports implementation of safe transportation of potentially hazardous materials, but we are also concerned about the negative consequences of enforcing the current PTC deadline. All but a handful of U.S. railroads have acknowledged that due primarily to technological challenges in a PTC system, they will not be ready for the December 31 deadline. That means they will not be able to transport these critical substances without facing steep federal fines, and are, therefore, unlikely to continue such shipments without an extension in place.

A number of railroads have already stated that they will embargo shipments of certain chemicals if the PTC implementation deadline is not extended. Some may begin their embargos before Thanksgiving to avoid stranding any chemical shipments on railroad lines after December 31. This scenario would greatly jeopardize water utilities' ability to protect public health through the proper treatment of water and wastewater.

We urge you to pass H.R. 3651 as soon as possible, so water utilities and other industries reliant on rail shipments of chemicals are not left facing uncertainty as the calendar advances toward 2016. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact our organizations.

Sincerely,

American Water Works Association
Association of California Water Agencies
Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies
National Association of Clean Water Agencies
National Association of Water Companies
Water Environment Federation