



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 2083

Resolution calling upon the United States Congress to direct the Federal Railroad Administration to conduct a comprehensive passenger rail safety study and to pass legislation implementing any safety recommendations resulting from the study.

By Council Members Eugene, Chin, James, Koo, Koppell, Richards and Rose

Whereas, On December 1, 2013, a Metro-North Railroad train derailed near the Spuyten Duyvil station in the Bronx, killing 4 passengers and injuring more than 60 others; and

Whereas, Preliminary reports indicate that excessive speed entering a curve was the likely cause of the incident; and

Whereas, The train involved was a push-pull train being operated in push mode, meaning the locomotive was pushing the train from the rear and the engineer was operating the train from a cab in the front of the first passenger car, a common configuration on Metro-North and other commuter railroads; and

Whereas, Concerns about the safety of push trains in light of a deadly 2005 train crash in California led Congress to direct the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) to conduct a study of the issue; and

Whereas, The resulting FRA report found no “statistically significant difference” between the derailment histories of push and pull trains; and

Whereas, Although the report did find a higher fatality rate in push trains compared to pull trains, it did not recommend the discontinuation of push trains in commuter service, noting that pull trains have the potential to be more dangerous in certain types of incidents; and

Whereas, The findings of the report should be updated to reflect incidents that have occurred since it was published and with a wider focus on all train incidents, not just highway-rail grade crossing collisions; and

Whereas, Like many trains, the Metro-North train that crashed did not have seatbelts; and

Whereas, The FRA should study the potential effectiveness of seatbelts in preventing injuries and deaths during train collisions and derailments; and

Whereas, A comprehensive passenger rail safety study which examines every aspect of the safety of passenger trains, including the use of push trains and the potential effectiveness of seatbelts, should be conducted by the FRA; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the United States Congress to direct the Federal Railroad Administration to conduct a comprehensive passenger rail safety study and to pass legislation implementing any safety recommendations resulting from the study.

LS#5242, 5243, 5244
12/10/2013
JM