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WASHINGTON, DC (*July 27, 2012*) – Today Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) sent a letter to Julius Genachowski, Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, regarding concerns expressed by Metra, a commuter railway system serving the Chicagoland area, and the millions of passengers it serves yearly.

The Railway Safety Improvement Act of 2008 put in place a requirement for freight and passenger railways to implement Positive Train Control (PTC) systems, which will help reduce railway accidents. In response to concerns about cost and the timeline for implementation, the FCC's Wireless Telecommunications Bureau (WTB) announced last May that it would seek comments from stakeholders regarding the frequency bands and amount of spectrum needed for railways to successfully establish a PTC system.

Metra submitted its concerns about PTC implementation in response to the FCC's request for comment. The implementation of PTC could cost Metra as much as \$200 million, and under the law must be implemented by December, 2015. The comment period closed over a year ago and no action has yet been announced.

“The letter asks the FCC to take into consideration the concerns raised by Metra,” said **Rep.**

**Jan Schakowsky**

. “The deadline for implementation is quickly approaching, and Metra and other commuter railroads would benefit from information relevant to their PTC obligation. It is my hope that cost and feasibility will be seriously considered in implementing the PTC, and that accommodations will be made if necessary to enable commuter railways to comply.”

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July 27, 2012

Chairman Julius Genachowski

Federal Communications Commission

445 12th Street SW

Washington, DC 20554

RE: WT Docket No. 11-79 Spectrum Needs for Positive Train Control

Dear Chairman Genachowski:

I write in regards to a matter before the FCC that will impact my constituents and Metra (the Northeast Illinois Regional Commuter Railroad Corporation), a commuter railway system serving the Chicagoland area. I hope to gain a better understanding of the status of the proceeding before the FCC and to learn about FCC's plans to accommodate the concerns expressed by Metra and many other passenger rail lines.

The Railroad Safety Improvement Act of 2008 took several important steps to better protect the public from railway accidents that threaten passenger safety and regional security. Among the important changes was the plan to establish a Positive Train Control system which would use new technology to prevent train collisions, track malfunctions, and other damaging consequences. It also set a deadline of December 31, 2015 for implementation of the PTC system for Class I freight as well as passenger railroads.

Metra has served the Chicago area well, completing over 80 million passenger trips in 2010. The cost of implementation of the PTC could be as much as \$200 million for Metra alone. Metra – like many other commuter railways – is not in a position to fund that kind of an

investment, nor does it want to pass the cost on to commuters and businesses that rely upon its services.

Last May, the FCC's Wireless Telecommunications Bureau (WTB) announced that it would seek comments from stakeholders regarding the frequency bands and amount of spectrum needed to successfully implement PTC. According to the FCC, "the record received in response to this Public Notice will be instrumental in a Commission determination of what future proceedings or actions, if any, might facilitate an effective, efficient, and timely process for railroads to acquire spectrum to comply with the PTC implementation requirements under the RSIA and FRA regulations." Metra joined with other commuter railroads and submitted comments through the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) to that proceeding. The comment period closed over a year ago, but no action has yet been announced on this matter.

I would like to know when action can be expected in response to the WTB proceeding. As you know, the deadline for implementation is quickly approaching, and Metra and other commuter railroads would benefit from information relevant to their PTC obligation. It is my hope that cost and feasibility will be seriously considered in implementing the PTC, and that accommodations will be made if necessary to enable commuter railways to comply.

Your attention to these issues is much appreciated. I look forward to hearing from you regarding the WTB proceeding and the FCC's plan to address the concerns raised by Metra and other commuter rail lines.

