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June 7, 2016

The Honorable Sarah E. Feinberg
Administrator
Federal Railroad Administration
Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Administrator Feinberg:

I am writing to urge the prompt release of the findings from your investigation of the July 8, 2015 freight train and truck collision in Maspeth, Queens. I appreciate that the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) undertook not only the review of this incident, but also expanded the inspection to include the safety procedures of the railway operator, New York and Atlantic Railway (NY&A). However, I am alarmed that the one year anniversary of this crash is approaching without the answers needed to improve the safety of one of the most frequented grade crossings on the most active railway in my congressional district.

Thankfully, the specific train crash that prompted this investigation resulted in no fatalities. Footage of the crash, in which a truck was pushed along the tracks for 200 feet, shows that the gates did not come down, and the lights did not flash, until just before the impact, indicating malfunctioning safety systems. Unfortunately, the July 2015 crash is not the first at this intersection, but I hope it is the last.

Thank you for agreeing to investigate this grade crossing and the safety operations of the railway in the Sixth Congressional District in Queens. I hope you will do the same for other grade crossings operated by NY&A in my district that also do not have adequate warning systems corresponding with the level of traffic: for example, the crossing at 88th Street between 76th Avenue and 77th Avenue, as previously requested. Again, I urge you to quickly release the data and recommendations resulting from your investigation into the crash that occurred on July 8, 2015; every day that lingers without these crucial safety improvements is another day where lives are at risk.

Sincerely,

Grace Meng
Member of Congress

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