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**News**

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Contact: Ketrina Nelson

Tel: 202-366-0774

**U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood Announces**

**New Transit Rail Advisory Committee for Safety**

***Panel Charged with Laying the Groundwork for***

***Drafting National Safety Measures for Rail Transit***

U.S. Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood today announced members of the Transit Rail Advisory Committee for Safety (TRACS), a newly formed advisory committee that will assist the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) with developing national safety standards for rail transit.

In December 2009, the Obama Administration sent Congress the President’s Public Transportation Safety Program Act of 2009, which would authorize the Department of Transportation to establish federal safety standards for rail transit systems, reversing a prohibition that has been in effect since 1965.  The Transit Advisory Committee for Safety will guide the FTA’s safety rulemaking agenda if the final legislation is passed by Congress and signed by the President.

“We have brought together some of the best and brightest minds in the transit industry to focus on new and better ways to keep millions of daily rail transit riders safe,” LaHood said.  “Safety is the Department of Transportation’s number one priority.  These professionals will help guide our safety agenda for rail transit systems across the nation**.”**

The legislation is the first time any Administration has sent a bill to Congress specifically about transit.  It is appropriately focused on improving safety oversight.  FTA is prohibited from directly overseeing transit agency safety programs. The recommendations of TRACS will help FTA develop new policies and practices and, should FTA be given authority to promulgate new transit safety requirements, new regulations for enhancing rail transit safety.

“While public transit is one of the safest ways to get around, we still experience preventable accidents—including fatal accidents—far too frequently.   We must take measures to ensure that safety margins are maintained as our systems grow older and experienced workers retire in increasing numbers,” FTA Administrator Peter Rogoff said. “This advisory committee of industry experts will lay the foundation for the implementation of national safety standards once Congress passes President Obama’s safety legislation.”

The 20 individuals who will initially serve on TRACS were chosen from among 79 applicants from all geographic regions in the U.S., representing state and local transit agencies, state safety oversight organizations, transit employee unions, industry associations, and other stakeholders.

Qualifications sought for TRACS members included expertise in the field of safety or rail transit operations or maintenance, and representation of stakeholder interests that would be affected by rail transit safety requirements. Applicants were also evaluated based on policy experience, leadership, and organization skills, region of the country, and diversity characteristics. TRACS members are:

* William Bates, Amtrak Conductor, United Transportation Union (Local 1933)

Legislative Representative and Vice Local Chair, Richmond, Virginia

* Bernadette Bridges, Executive Director of the Office of Safety and Risk Management, Maryland Transit Administration (MTA), Baltimore, Maryland
* Eric Cheng, Programs Manager, Federal Railroad Crossing Safety Improvement, Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT), Salt Lake City, Utah
* Diane Davidson, Director of The Center for Transportation Analysis, Oak Ridge National Laboratory, Knoxville, Tennessee
* Joe Diaz, Manager of Safety, Security and Training, Hillsborough Area Regional Transit Authority (HART), Tampa, Florida
* James Dougherty, Chief Safety Officer, Washington Metropolitan Area Transportation Authority (WMATA), Washington, DC
* David Genova, Assistant General Manager for Safety, Security Facilities, Denver Regional Transportation District (RTD), Denver, Colorado
* Georgetta Gregory, Rail Safety Group, California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), Sacramento, California
* William Grizard, Director State Management Programs, American Public Transportation Association (APTA), Washington, DC
* Leonard Hardy, Manager of Operations-Safety Division, Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BART) , San Francisco, California
* Henry Hartberg, Senior Manger-Safety (Bus and Rail), Dallas Area Rapid Transit Authority (DART), Dallas, Texas
* Rick Inclima, Director of Safety, Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division (BMWED), Washington, DC
* Jackie Jeter, President/Business Agent/Safety Officer, Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU), Washington, DC
* Linda Kleinbaum, Deputy Executive Director of Administration, Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), New York, New York
* Amy Kovalan, Chief Safety and Security Officer/Senior Vice President-Safety, Security and Rick Compliance, Chicago Transit Authority (CTA), Chicago, Illinois.
* Richard Krisak, Assistant General Manager Rail Operations, Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA), Atlanta, Georgia
* Tamara Lesh, Deputy General Counsel, Tri-County Metropolitan Transportation District (TRIMET), Portland, Oregon
* Pamela McCombe, Director of Safety, Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (Greater Cleveland RTA), Cleveland, Ohio
* Alvin Pearson, Assistant General Manager, Memphis Area Transit Authority (MATA), Memphis, Tennessee
* Ed Watt, Director of Health and Safety, Transport Workers Union of American (TWU), New York, New York

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