



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Railroad
Administration**

Administrator

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

APR 21 2015

Mr. Howard Shelanski
Administrator, Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs
Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street NW
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Administrator Shelanski:

On April 17, 2015, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) issued a Notice of Safety Advisory (Safety Advisory 2015-01) recommending that railroads take certain actions to enhance the mechanical safety of freight cars in trains transporting large quantities of flammable liquids (referred to as high-hazard flammable trains or HHFTs). This Safety Advisory recommends that railroads use highly qualified individuals to conduct the brake and mechanical inspections and recommends a reduction to the impact threshold levels industry currently uses for wayside detectors that measure wheel impacts to ensure the wheel integrity of tank cars in those trains. The Advisory (and FRA Notice requesting Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Emergency Clearance Processing for the associated information collection) will be published in the Federal Register.

Safety Advisory 2015-01 is one of the U.S. Department of Transportation's latest steps to improve the safety of the rail transportation of flammable liquids, particularly the rail transport of petroleum crude oil and ethanol.¹ The Safety Advisory works in concert with FRA's Emergency Order No. 30 and the latest Safety Advisory jointly-issued by FRA and the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (both of which were issued on April 17, 2015).

The Safety Advisory describes the circumstances surrounding the most recent rail accidents involving the transportation of flammable liquids, including the most recent accident that occurred on March 5, 2015. In that accident, a train transporting crude oil derailed near Galena, Illinois, resulting in a fire. The train was traveling approximately 23 miles per hour (mph) when 21 cars derailed and several cars experienced thermal tears and others released product through the bottom outlet valves and top fittings.

In this Safety Advisory, FRA explains that, with the rising demand for rail transportation of flammable liquids throughout the United States, particularly petroleum crude oil and ethanol,

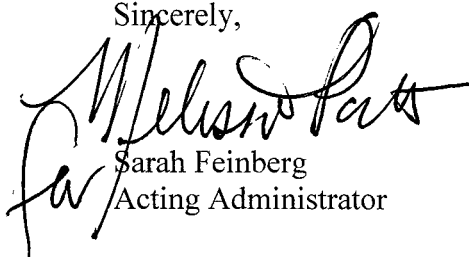
¹ Both petroleum crude oil and ethanol are Class 3 flammable liquids, the transportation of which is regulated by the U.S. Department of Transportation.

the risk of rail accidents has increased commensurately with the increase in the volume of the material shipped. To address this increased risk, in the Safety Advisory, FRA recommends that railroads operating HHFTs continue to install and maintain Wheel Impact Load Detectors along routes traveled by those trains. Further, FRA recommends that when a railroad receives notification of a wheel impact of 60 kips (60,000 pounds of force) or above for a car in an HHFT, depending on the impact measured, the railroad take certain corrective actions. FRA also recommends that, when preparing HHFTs for movements 500 miles or more, railroads utilize qualified mechanical inspectors (as defined in FRA's Brake System Safety Standards at 49 CFR part 232) to conduct initial terminal brake inspections and designated inspectors (as defined in FRA's Freight Car Safety Standards at 49 CFR part 215) to conduct freight car inspections at initial terminals.

As provided under 5 CFR § 1320.13, *Emergency Processing*, FRA is requesting emergency processing for this new collection of information as specified in the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 and its implementing regulations. FRA cannot reasonably comply with normal clearance procedures because the use of normal clearance procedures is reasonably likely to disrupt the collection of information. Safety Advisory 2015-01 takes effect immediately upon issuance. FRA cannot wait the normal 90- to 180-day period for routine OMB review and approval.

Upon OMB approval of its emergency clearance request, FRA will follow the normal clearance procedures for the information collection associated with Safety Advisory 2015-01.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sarah Feinberg". The signature is stylized and cursive, with a large initial "S" and "F".

Sarah Feinberg
Acting Administrator