



U.S. Department  
of Transportation

**Federal Railroad  
Administration**

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

July 1, 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 June 9, 2015, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) issued a Notice of Safety Advisory (Safety Advisory 2015-03) recommending passenger railroads and railroads that host passenger service<sup>1</sup> take certain actions to control passenger train speeds at main line track locations where there is a reduction of more than 20 miles per hour from the approach speed to a curve or bridge and the maximum authorized operating speed for passenger trains at that curve or bridge. Safety Advisory 2015-03 was published in the Federal Register on June 12, 2015 (80 Fed. Reg. 33585) and FRA's Notice requesting OMB Emergency Clearance Processing for the associated information collection will be published in the Federal Register shortly.

Safety Advisory 2015-03 is part of FRA's proactive response to a May 12, 2015, accident in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in which eight Amtrak passengers were killed and a significant number of others were seriously injured.<sup>2</sup> The accident occurred when an Amtrak passenger train was traveling over twice the passenger train speed limit through a sharp curve and derailed. Safety Advisory 2015-03 describes the circumstances surrounding the accident, as well as the 2013 Metro-North Commuter Railroad Company (Metro-North) accident that occurred in New York in which four passengers were killed. The 2013 Metro-North accident also occurred when a passenger train derailed in a curve while also traveling well in excess of the passenger train speed limit.

Safety Advisory 2015-03 explains that FRA believes all passenger railroads and railroads that host passenger service need to evaluate their systems and take immediate actions to prevent future catastrophic overspeed events from occurring. Safety Advisory 2015-03 recommends that passenger railroads and railroads that host passenger service identify certain curve and bridge locations on their main track where there is a significant reduction in

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<sup>1</sup> Safety Advisory 2015-03 only applies to the portions of the railroad's system over which passenger service is operated.

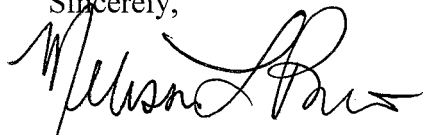
<sup>2</sup> Prior to issuing Safety Advisory 2015-03, on May 21, 2015, FRA issued Emergency Order No. 31 which directed Amtrak to take specific actions to prevent overspeed derailments at certain curve locations on its main line track on the Northeast Corridor. 80 Fed. Reg. 30536, May 28, 2015.

authorized operating speed. FRA recommends the railroads then make modifications to their signal systems or operating procedures at those curves and bridges. Finally, FRA recommends that the railroads install additional speed limit signage at the identified locations.

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 2015-03 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 2015-03.

Sincerely,



Melissa L. Porter  
Chief Counsel