

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 10, 2023

Amit Bose
Administrator
Federal Railroad Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20003

Dear Administrator Bose,

I write today to express my deep concern with the threat to safety Brightline trains pose to my community. As they work with your team at the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) in preparation to launch high-speed trains from West Palm Beach, FL to Orlando, FL my constituents along the Treasure Coast need assurance that improvements have been made to Brightline's operating practices since they began offering services in 2017.

Brightline is known around the country as "the nation's deadliest railroad,"¹ and that is just with offering service in three counties. In 2022, 22 people were struck and killed by Brightline trains.² On February 7, 2023, I questioned National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) Chair Jennifer Homendy. In her testimony, she admitted that she wanted the NTSB to launch an investigation into Brightline due to the number of deaths that have occurred.³

The following day, on February 8, 2023, a Brightline train collided with an SUV that was on the train tracks in Del Ray Beach, tragically killing two people.⁴ As a result, the NTSB has sent a team of 11 investigators to look into this specific crash, as well as the litany of other incidents involving Brightline.⁵ Chair Homendy has also informed us that FRA will also be sending a team to work in conjunction with their investigation. I'm thankful that both the NTSB and FRA are taking these crashes seriously and getting to the bottom of why so many people have lost their lives to Brightline trains.

At the same time, the FRA is currently working with Brightline on their New Starts Checklist and the Pre-Revenue Safety Validation Plan. It seems entirely reasonable that the FRA should wait until the completion of the NTSB's and their own investigations. The launch of investigations clearly indicate that Brightline needs to make changes to mitigate legitimate safety

¹ <https://www.npr.org/2020/01/29/799962246/brightline-nations-deadliest-railroad-after-high-number-of-track-deaths>

² <https://www.miaminewtimes.com/news/death-train-a-timeline-of-brightline-deaths-in-miami-fort-lauderdale-west-palm-beach-13717396>

³ <https://twitter.com/RepBrianMast/status/1623419306619936768?s=20&t=i687QNlbzMbU9z3aBWm6lw>

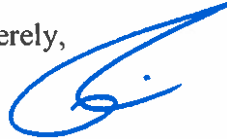
⁴ <https://www.msn.com/en-us/autos/news/2-people-killed-after-brightline-train-crashes-into-suv-in-delray-beach/ar-AA17imtm>

⁵ https://twitter.com/NTSB_Newsroom/status/1623770254236065793?s=20&t=WFA8sooMHS4ZmAhssAU7-A

concerns. Brightline's expanded service should not begin until the results of and recommendations from the investigations are released and integrated into their operations.

When the FRA allowed Brightline to begin operations in 2017, not enough was done to keep Floridians safe. Now is the time to correct that mistake before it is too late for more than a million people who will be put at risk by Brightline's expanded service. Thank you for your attention to this serious matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'B. Mast', with a large, sweeping flourish extending upwards and to the right.

Brian Mast
Member of Congress