



U.S. Department  
of Transportation

**Federal Railroad  
Administration**

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

MAR 07 2018

John Risch  
National Legislative Director  
SMART Transportation Division  
304 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE  
Washington, DC 20003-1147

Dear Mr. Risch:

Thank you for your letter of April 25, 2017, to the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) expressing safety concerns about railroads operating “incredibly long” trains. You raised five specific safety concerns and asked that FRA investigate and issue an Emergency Order limiting the length of trains.

Many railroads have begun operating longer trains in an attempt to enhance service delivery and operational efficiencies. In 2016, FRA began looking at the length of trains as a potential contributing cause of FRA reportable accidents/incidents. FRA will be in contact with SMART-Transportation Division, as we recognize that, as the operators of various train consists, your members will be able to provide valuable information and insight into the matter. At this time, however, FRA does not have sufficient data or evidence to justify an Emergency Order limiting the length of trains.

If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Mr. Christian Holt, Operating Practices Safety Specialist, at [Christian.Holt@dot.gov](mailto:Christian.Holt@dot.gov) or 202-366-0978.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robert C. Lauby".

Robert C. Lauby  
Associate Administrator for Railroad Safety  
Chief Safety Officer