

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

April 15, 2016

The Honorable Sarah E. Feinberg
Administrator
Federal Railroad Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Administrator Feinberg,

We appreciate the Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA's) decision to reopen the train horn rule for public comment. While we believe the FRA should have re-opened the rule several years ago, we hope the Agency will give due consideration to each comment, and make the appropriate changes to improve the effectiveness of the rule. Train horn noise is a serious concern for our constituents and communities, especially our downtown areas.

We believe the FRA's train horn regulations should consider whether communities are able to invest in reasonable and financially viable railway crossing safety enhancements. The regulations also should take into account whether the rule may be making it too difficult for communities to improve their neighborhoods by establishing Quiet Zones.

We consistently hear from our constituents that train horn noise is more than a nuisance for local residents. Rather, it stifles economic development by discouraging businesses and housing developers from building and locating in the heart of their communities. While we agree the FRA train horn rule has a good purpose—to promote public safety—the high decibel levels are interfering with quality of life and they may not be necessary to maintain an equivalent level of safety.

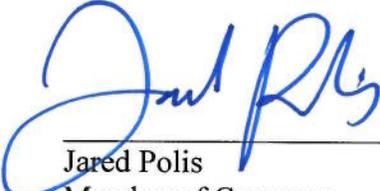
For instance, trains traveling through dense areas, where vehicles travel slowly, may travel at 25 MPH while other trains traveling in more open areas, with higher speed vehicles, may travel at up to 79 MPH. The requirements for safety at those railway crossings are different and the appropriate decibel level of the train horn may differ as well.

While we appreciate the FRA has created a Quiet Zone waiver from the train horn rule, we believe that the current waiver requirements are far too inflexible and may not account for the realities or variances in each of our communities. Cities across the country want to invest in these safety improvements and reduce train horn noise to improve commerce and quality of life for their residents. Unfortunately, achieving Quiet Zone status can take years of work with FRA and can cost millions of dollars, far beyond the limited resources available to many of these towns and small cities.

We again invite you to visit some of these communities in Colorado, such as Fort Collins, Arvada, Longmont, and Commerce City, to experience first-hand the difficulties that the loud and constant train noise presents for these residents and businesses.

We look forward to continuing to work with FRA to improve the ability for our communities to continue investing in railway crossing safety. A more flexible rule could enable these communities to craft innovative solutions to reduce noise, promote long-term economic growth, and at the same time ensure the safety of residents. We encourage you to move quickly with this rulemaking and respond to the constructive thoughts of our communities.

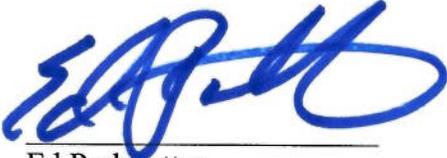
Sincerely,



Jared Polis
Member of Congress



Michael F. Bennet
U.S. Senator



Ed Perlmutter
Member of Congress



Ken Buck
Member of Congress