

# Monroe County Legislature

**LYNDA GARNER GOLDSTEIN**

LEGISLATOR - DISTRICT 14

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LEGISLATOR-DISTRICT 14

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**COMMITTEES:**

Recreation & Education

Ranking Democratic Member

January 26, 2005

To The Honorable  
Monroe County Legislature  
39 West Main Street  
Rochester, NY 14614

**RE: Memorializing the United States Congress and President George W. Bush to Pass and Sign Legislation Strengthening the Regulatory Power of the Federal Railroad Administration**

Honorable Legislators:

In December 2001, a CSX freight train derailed and burned in Charlotte, damaging homes and contaminating soil and water in that section of the City of Rochester. In 2004, an elderly couple died when a train struck their car at a faulty CSX rail crossing on Brighton-Henrietta Town Line Road.

These and other incidents highlight the potential dangers posed by the rail lines that serve Monroe County and greater Rochester. Given the dangerous nature of many rail shipments and the number of trains that cross over busy highways daily, regulatory oversight of rail safety must be a priority.

The Federal Railroad Administration is the agency responsible for this oversight, but it labors under significant disadvantages: Insufficient numbers of inspectors and a restricted ability to investigate, prosecute and fine companies that violate federal regulations.

In January, New York Sen. Charles Schumer announced legislation that would double the number of FRA inspectors from 400 to 800 while expanding the agency's powers of oversight, particularly with respect to investigation and the leveling of penalties.

Also, the Schumer bill calls for upgrades to antiquated rail infrastructure. For instance, railroads would be required to replace manual switches with automated devices in order to reduce the likelihood of collision and derailment. Aging tanker cars used to ship hazardous materials would also be replaced.

To ease the fiscal impact of these and other requirements, railroads would have five years to meet new federal safety standards.

Rochester and Monroe County have already seen tragedy related to poor railroad maintenance and regulation, as have other metropolitan areas. The legislation proposed by Sen. Schumer is prudent and timely and deserving of bipartisan support. Indeed, Mr. Schumer, a Democrat, is co-sponsored in this effort by Republican Sen. Lindsay Graham of South Carolina.




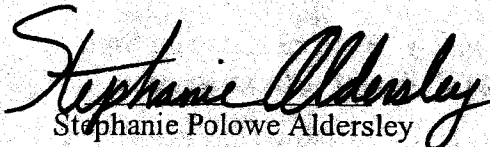
We, therefore, ask our colleagues to join us in memorializing the United States Congress to pass and President George W. Bush to sign the legislation co-sponsored by Sen. Charles Schumer of New York and Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina , strengthening the regulatory powers of the Federal Railroad Administration.

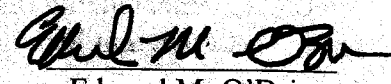
Please forward this memorialization to the appropriate officers of the federal government.

This request shall have no impact on the revenues or expenditures of the 2005 Monroe County budget.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Lynda Garner Goldstein  
Legislator – District 14

  
Stephanie Polowe Aldersley  
Democratic Leader

  
Edward M. O'Brien  
Legislator – District 17