



## California Lawmakers Call for Increased Rail Safety

March 18, 2005

*Washington, DC – In the wake of recent railroad derailments in Southern California, U.S. Senators Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer along with Representatives Grace Napolitano and Linda Sanchez (all D-Calif.) Los Angeles County Supervisor Gloria Molina today urged Transportation Secretary Norman Mineta to personally oversee implementation of a rail safety plan in the region.*

*Following is the text of the letter sent to Secretary Mineta:*

**March 15, 2005**

**Secretary Norman Y. Mineta  
Secretary of Transportation  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
400 7th Street, S.W.  
Washington, D.C., 20590**

**Dear Secretary Mineta:**

**As elected officials from the State of California, we are extremely concerned about the high incidence of railroad derailment accidents nationwide in recent months, including one as recent as March 8, 2005, in California.**

**On December 10, 2004, the Office of the Inspector General within the Department of Transportation recommended that the Federal Railroad Administration submit to your office a comprehensive plan to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of FRA's safety enforcement and compliance program. The Inspector General recommended that the FRA submit a plan that would address the following: field inspection activities; assessment of partnership-traditional enforcement; appropriate amounts of fines, factoring in prior safety /enforcement history and trends. The Inspector General called on FRA to submit this plan to your office by March 10, 2005, and that the plan be fully operational within 6 months.**

**Given the critical importance of this plan, we respectfully request that you or the Deputy Secretary personally oversee this plan. In order to expedite delivery of an improved federal enforcement and compliance program, your involvement together with vigorous action by the FRA administrator should ensure the plan's implementation within 2 months. We do not believe safety needs to wait another 6 months. Your personal involvement offers**

**the best promise to improve railroad safety by ensuring that we make maximum use of FRA's inspection force. As part of the Congressional oversight process we request a report on program implementation during each of the next two months. We thank you very much for your attention to this matter.**

**Sincerely,**

**Dianne Feinstein, United States Senator  
Barbara Boxer, United States Senator  
Grace Napolitano, United States Representative  
Linda Sanchez, United States Representative  
Gloria Molina, Los Angeles County Supervisor**

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