

We are sure you are aware of the disquieting picture described in this letter, and concur in the view we hold that every reasonable step be taken to arrest and reverse the trend toward increasing incidence of train accidents. Recognizing that there are limits both to your resources and your authority nonetheless we recommend that all available resources at your disposal be applied to reverse these accident trends. Increased attention to accident investigations and the issuance of more published accident investigation reports are several possibilities; others are increased inspections addressed to the worst areas of accident cause and to railroads where a disproportionate number of accidents occur.

Collaterally, we recommend that the Federal Railroad Administration initiate studies which would go beyond the data provided in current accident reports, with particular attention being given to derailments. Studies should include such factors as level of maintenance, types of inspection techniques used by railroads, influence of operating rules on accident causation, and employee responsibility for unsafe practices. Other areas deserving of attention or review include the use and value of railroad employee safety incentives, research and development to determine how management and employees, individually or jointly, can improve safety techniques and reduce accidents, and the possible borrowing and adaptation of successful safety practices from other transportation modes. The results of such studies should lead to initiation of new or augmented action programs by the Federal Railroad Administration to improve railroad safety.

We are aware that current regulatory authority does not encompass many areas related to the causes of many railroad accidents. Our concern about the state of railroad operations vis-a-vis safety was indicated in the recommendations accompanying our report on the railroad collision in New York City, where we stated that there is clear need for a reappraisal, a self-assessment and corrective action by the railroad industry.

We believe that the primary responsibility for improved railroad safety should rest upon railroad management and labor. However, we reiterate here that if it appears that they cannot or will not accept the challenge promptly to arrest the worsening railroad accident picture, consideration should be given to supporting or proposing Federal legislation which would provide additional safety regulatory authority for the Department of Transportation in the railroad safety field.

Sincerely,

JOSEPH J. O'CONNELL, Jr., *Chairman.*

EXHIBIT A

	Number of derailments			Proportion of primary causes of derailments to total derailments			Derailments per million train-miles		
	1961	1966	Trend (percent)	1961 (percent)	1966 (percent)	Trend (percent)	1961	1966	Trend (percent)
Primary cause of derailments:									
Defects in or improper maintenance of way and structures.....	577	1,388	+140.0	21.6	31.2	+44.5	0.99	2.31	+133.0
Defects in or failure of equipment.....	1,268	1,550	+22.2	47.5	34.9	-26.5	2.17	2.58	+18.9
Negligence of employees.....	329	553	+68.1	12.3	12.4	+ .8	.56	.92	+64.3
Other.....	497	956	+92.4	18.6	21.5	+15.6	.85	1.59	+87.1
Total derailments.....	2,671	4,447	+66.5				4.57	7.39	+61.7

EXHIBIT B

	1961		1966		Trend (percent)	
	Number of derailments	Proportion of total derailments (percent)	Number of derailments	Proportion of total derailments (percent)	Number of derailments	Proportion of total derailments
Defects in or failure of tie and/or tie-plates.....	27	4.7	107	7.7	+296	+63.8
Improper track alignment.....	15	2.6	55	4.0	+266	+53.8
Defects in or failure of frogs and/or switches.....	93	16.1	267	19.3	+187	+19.9
Improper superelevation of track.....	24	4.2	60	4.3	+150	+2.4
Defects in or failure of rails and/or rail joints.....	326	56.5	661	47.6	+103	-15.8
Other.....	92	15.9	238	17.1	+159	+7.5
Total.....	577	100.0	1,388	100.0	+140	