



**Senators Feinstein and Boxer Call for Safety Analysis  
of Train Operations in east Los Angeles County**  
November 18, 2004

**Washington, DC** – In the wake of two train derailments in east Los Angeles County in the past sixteen months, Senators Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer (both D-Calif.) today asked the Federal Railroad Administration to conduct a comprehensive safety analysis of train operations in the greater Whittier area.

On October 16, 2004, a train derailed near Pico Rivera, cutting off electricity to 100 homes and causing the evacuation of 200 people due to spilled diesel fuel. This follows a June 2003 incident on the same rail line in which a runaway train traveling at 95 mph derailed in Commerce, destroying several homes and injuring 13 people.

Following is a letter the Senators sent to Betty Monro, Acting Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration:

Ms. Betty Monro  
Acting Administrator, Federal Railroad Administration  
1120 Vermont Ave., NW  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Administrator Monro:

“We are writing to express our grave concerns regarding rail safety in the Greater Whittier area in the Los Angeles Subdivision of Union Pacific Railroad. As you know, the October 16, 2004, train derailment in the Pico Rivera community caused the evacuation of 200 residents and considerable financial and personal loss. This derailment is only the latest in a string of rail-related incidents that have beset eastern Los Angeles County.

In the last fifteen months, eastern Los Angeles County was struck by two separate railroad derailments, occurring within only ten miles of one another. The October derailment of eleven rail cars destroyed one home and damaged four others; it cut electricity to one hundred houses and spilled five hundred gallons of diesel fuel and hazardous cargo at the crash site. In July, 2003, a runaway train, operating at ninety-five miles per hour, derailed and injured thirteen people, destroying homes and causing approximately \$2.4 million dollars in damage.

We respectfully request that the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) conduct a comprehensive safety systems assessment on train operations conducted on the segment of track traversing the greater Whittier area. We ask that the FRA send a multi-disciplinary inspection team,

using personnel from other regions of the nation to focus on a comprehensive set of concerns, especially hours of service, grade-crossing, track signals, operating practices and significant maintenance that has been performed on this section of the track. We would also ask that you review whether past defects or violations have been corrected in a timely manner.

As the Acting Administrator of the FRA, you have a record of prioritizing safety and we are confident that your leadership will continue to be guided, first and foremost, by a concern for the safety of the communities in which you operate. We look forward to your reply regarding this matter.”

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