

Washington, DC -- Today, U.S. Representative Michael A. Arcuri sent a letter to the Director of the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) calling on the Administration to quickly and thoroughly investigate the recent CSX train derailment that occurred on Monday in Oneida, New York.

“The impact of the train derailment incident on the local economy and possible effects on human health within the local community can not be understated,” Arcuri said. “I am calling on the National Transportation Safety Board to work with local residents and experts to ensure that any rail cargo, especially toxic cargo, is transported in the most safe and secure manner possible. We have seen studies in the last week indicating that trail derailments have increased. It is past time to take a long hard look at our rail infrastructure and safety.”

Below is a copy of the letter Arcuri sent to the Director of the National Transportation Safety Board earlier today:

March 16, 2007

Mr. Robert Chipkevich
Director, Office of Railroad, Pipeline and
Hazardous Materials Investigations
National Transportation Safety Board
490 L'Enfant Plaza
Washington, DC, 20594

Dear Mr. Chipkevich:

In light of the recent CSX train derailment near Oneida, NY, I strongly urge the National Transportation Safety Board to conduct a thorough investigation and release a report of the incident as soon as possible.

The safety of Upstate New Yorkers was put in harms way on Monday morning and it is of the utmost importance that your agency provide the answers we need to help us prevent this from happening again in the future. The site of the accident was a mere two miles away from Sherrill, NY, a city in Oneida County, which I am proud to represent. Thankfully, neither fatalities nor injuries were a consequence of this disaster. However, the safety and comfort of people close to the accident site has been deeply affected by the incident – eight families still have not been able to return to their homes due to safety concerns.

The well-being of my constituents and the safety of New York's railways is a top priority for me as a new member of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. Reports of 18 train derailments in Western New York between January 2005 and September 2006, and now the incident in Oneida only 5 months after the last, leads me to believe that the state of New York's freight railways are in need of attention and repairs.

We need to work together – federal, state and local levels of government – to ensure that proper accountability for our Nation's railways is enforced and measures are put in place to prevent events like this from occurring in the future.

I want to thank you for your agency's rapid response to the accident, and for efficiently mobilizing NTSB officials to the site shortly after the derailment occurred. I hope during the remainder of this investigation your agency will continue its commitment to providing accurate information regarding this accident.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL A. ARCURI
Member of Congress

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