GREG LANDSMAN
1st District, Ohio

COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY AND
COMMERCE

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC

2244 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-3501
(202) 225-2216

961 E. McMillan St. #C-1
Cincinnati, OH 45206
(513) 810-7988

11 S. Broadway St. #301
Lebanon, OH 45036
(513) 409-6188

The Honorable David A. Fink
Administrator, Federal Railroad Administration
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Administrator Fink,

I'm writing to you today to bring light to a serious issue that is affecting citizens in my district and across the U.S. On October 20, 2026, an 89-year-old was killed in a house fire in Lockland, Ohio. The Cincinnati Enquirer reported that firefighters' path to the fire was slowed due to a stalled train blocking a railroad crossing.[1] Nationwide, there have been over 33,000 reports of blocked railroad crossings in the past year, according to Federal Railroad Administration data. Among these reports, over 22% of incidents involved first responders being unable to cross the tracks.[2] As train cars increase in length and reports of stalled trains persist, local emergency response efforts face real consequences.

Fires double in size every minute, and when it comes to life-saving care, chances of survival for someone without a pulse drop 10% for every minute first responders aren't on scene.[3] Each second counts, and a firetruck or ambulance stopped at a blocked railroad crossing could be a matter of life or death for individuals on the other side.

I firmly believe the federal government must act on this issue to prevent unnecessary deaths due to emergency responders being delayed at blocked railway crossings.

Accordingly, I respectfully request the Federal Railroad Administration's response to the following questions:

- What specific actions are you taking to investigate the tragic event in Lockland, Ohio?
- What specific actions is the FRA taking to identify, analyze, and prevent instances of blocked railway crossings?
- How does the FRA investigate instances of blocked railway crossings after they are submitted to the Blocked Crossings Portal?

---

[1] Patricia Gallagher Newberry, *Lockland No. 2 in county for stalled train reports in last year*, Cincinnati Enquirer (Oct. 20, 2026), https://www.cincinnati.com/story/news/politics/2026/10/20/stalled-trains-slow-first-responders-in-lockland/92331978007/?gnt-cfr=1&gca-cat=p&gca-uir=false&gca-epti=z116832p004250l003650c004250e1179xxv116832&gca-ft=218&gca-ds=sophi.

[2] *Blocked Crossing Data*, Federal Railroad Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation (Oct. 26, 2026), https://www.fra.dot.gov/blockedcrossings/incidents.

[3] Connor Steffan, *Ohio among top states for reported railroad blockages. Change would have to come from the federal level*, WCPO 9 Cincinnati (Oct. 19, 2026), https://www.wcpo.com/news/local-news/hamilton-county/ohio-among-top-states-for-reported-railroad-blockages-change-would-have-to-come-from-the-federal-level.

- What channels of communication, if any, exist between railway operators and 911 dispatchers in the instance of a blocked railway crossing preventing first responder access to their route?
- Moving forward, what will the FRA do to help improve coordination between railway operators and local emergency response teams to mitigate the effects of a blocked crossing?

Thank you for your time and attention to this important issue. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Congressman Greg Landsman