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Press Release

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IMMEDIATE

MTA Railroads Announce All Trains Operating in Positive Train Control, Critical Safety Technology

Complex System In Place on Metro-North and LIRR Ahead of Federal Deadline -- Herculean Accomplishment in Face of COVID-19 Challenges

Both Railroads Certified for Meeting Full Implementation Before End of Year

[See Video of the Announcement](#)

[See Photos of the Announcement](#)

MTA Metro-North Railroad President Catherine Rinaldi and Long Island Rail Road President Phil Eng announced today that all trains on both railroads are operating in Positive Train Control (PTC), an advanced commuter rail safety technology being installed across the country. The completion of the federally mandated technology project comes in ahead of the Dec. 31 deadline -- a remarkable feat given the scope of the project and challenges this year posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

"There is no higher priority at the MTA than safety, and full PTC implementation brings our railroad operations to the next level," said **Patrick J. Foye, MTA Chairman and CEO**. "I thank Cathy, Phil and the incredible employees at Metro-North and LIRR who made this happen by the federal deadline in the midst of a global pandemic. This technology will prevent future collisions and ultimately help save lives across our more than 500 mile commuter rail systems."

"Ensuring safety for the public and our employees is at the core of everything we do daily. The fact that our team at LIRR delivered PTC, a crucial piece of safety for our customers and fellow employees, during a global pandemic is remarkable, and I couldn't be prouder of their dedication and commitment to public service," said **LIRR President Phil Eng**. "Fulfilling this mandate prior to the deadline is a testament to our workforce, our partners in labor, and our collaborative success. The implementation of PTC adds to a roster of in-house initiatives we've employed over the past two years to make sure ours is as safe as possible for all."

"Metro-North's completion of PTC before the December 31, 2020 deadline was an all hands-on-deck effort that spanned multiple departments across the railroad," said **Catherine Rinaldi, President of Metro-North**. "It represents a historic leap forward in the safety and reliability of the system, and I couldn't be prouder of our team for achieving these milestones, despite supply chain and other challenges during the pandemic."

Through Positive Train Control (PTC), LIRR and Metro-North trains automatically communicate in real time with central dispatching offices -- sharing information on train position, speed and the actions of the locomotive engineer. If a train is traveling too fast, the system automatically takes control of the train to slow it down while alerting the engineer.

The system is designed to reduce the potential for human error to contribute to train-to-train collisions, trains traveling into zones where railroad employees are working on tracks, or derailments caused by a train traveling too fast into a curve or into a misaligned switch. It relies on a network of transponders spaced every one to two miles depending on interlocking density. Metro-North has 3,800 transponders and LIRR has 4,274.

All pieces of rolling stock, including revenue and work trains, have on-board computers. MTA staff and personnel from Systems Integrator Siemens and Bombardier have worked together around the clock for months to ensure the timely delivery of this system.

In several of the final steps toward reaching this milestone, the Long Island Rail Road on Dec. 5 achieved full interoperability with Amtrak, which runs in joint territory between Penn Station and Sunnyside, Queens. Metro-North completed New Haven Line boundary integration route testing which was commissioned on Dec. 4, and activated software on the New Haven Line's M8 fleet on December 3. Both railroads, in November, achieved safety plan approvals from the FRA and successfully continue implementation despite facing challenges, such as delayed delivery of system software earlier in the year and, and COVID-19 impacts since March.

The Long Island Rail Road's 305 route miles that are fully operational with PTC include areas of switching complexes at Jamaica and at Harold Interlocking, which consists of a complex set of interlockings in Sunnyside, Queens, where LIRR meets Amtrak's Northeast Corridor tracks for the connection to Penn Station.

Over 151,500 Metro-North revenue trains ran in full PTC mode from August 2019 -- November 2020. The 244.3 total route miles of in full PTC functionality in Metro-North's territory includes

- Hudson Line – 74.8 miles
- Harlem Line – 76.9 miles
- New Haven Line – 61 miles
- Danbury Branch – 24.2 miles
- New Canaan Branch – 6.3 miles

NJ Transit, which operates West of Hudson service under contract with Metro-North, is also operating in full PTC on the Pascack Valley and Port Jervis Lines.

Neal Zuckerman, MTA Board Member said: “I am deeply thankful to the MTA’s leadership, its employees and its contractors for fully implementing Positive Train Control. It has been years in coming and now, in support of the MTA’s highest obligation—safety—it is here. As the chair of the MTA Board’s PTC Working Group and the representative of a community that was affected by the tragedy of preventable rail accidents, I deeply appreciate the extraordinary efforts undergone to meet the federal deadline. It is impossible to eliminate all risk, but PTC allows commuters to feel safer and be safer. I consider implementing PTC one of the greatest accomplishments of this authority since I joined this board in 2014.”

Norman Brown, MTA Board Member said: “There is no way, or reason, to minimize the accomplishment of integrating Positive Train Control with the existing century-old speed control systems left over from the several predecessor railroads to Metro North and the Long Island Rail Road, as well as the complex environment involving other railroads and freight. The many individuals involved from concept, to legislation, to financing, to planning, to constructing and to operating should be congratulated. The MTA teams, in addition to the FRA, Contractor and Supplier Teams, and consultants met their particular goals while maintaining collaboration and accomplishing something that has never been done before.”

Randy Glucksman, MTA Board Member and Chairman of the Metro-North Railroad Commuter Council said: “Positive Train Control will help ensure that riders get where they’re going safely. As a member of the MTA’s PTC Working Group and someone who has been following this very closely, less than two years ago completion of its installation seemed to be almost out of reach. Persistence and hard work by various staff and contractor personnel working together accomplished this very important goal. On behalf of myself and also our customers, I want to thank everyone who is or was involved in getting Metro-North and the Long Island Rail Road across the finish line.”

Rhonda Herman, MTA Board Member said: “I congratulate the Presidents of Metro-North and LIRR and their respective teams on the attainment of this major milestone. This multi-year effort was delivered on time with many challenges along the way not the least of which was the COVID-19 pandemic. The support of the MTA Board was also a factor in ensuring the success of this project.”

Ronald L. Batory, Administrator, Federal Railroad Administration said: “As FRA Administrator, it has been a privilege to oversee both Long Island Rail Road and Metro-North Railroad as they fully implemented FRA-certified and interoperable PTC systems on their required networks. I commend the perseverance and commitment at all levels of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority in successfully meeting this important deadline.”

U.S. Senator Charles E. Schumer said: “Following harrowing tragedies, I championed the Rail Safety Improvement Act which mandated that railroads—passenger and freight—install positive train control (PTC) on their networks to keep passengers and crew safe. Since then, the nation and New York have experienced dozens of railroad accidents with injuries and deaths that would have been prevented by PTC. Beginning on January 1, with the PTC mandate in effect, these accidents will hopefully be a thing of the past. Over the last decade, I delivered nearly \$1 billion in federal funds to help MTA meet this deadline. I am relieved and pleased that LIRR and Metro-North commuters can ride the rails more certain of their safety in the years ahead.”

U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand said: “Today’s announcement that Metro-North and the Long Island Rail Road completed the implementation of Positive Train Control ahead of the year-end deadline is a major milestone in our work to create safer railroads. I’m proud to have worked in the Senate to require the installation and use of this critical, life-saving technology that will ensure that derailments like the one that occurred near Spuyten Duyvil just over seven years ago, never happens again. I applaud the MTA’s hard work and thank them for their commitment to getting this done ahead of the deadline set by Congress.”

U.S. Senator Richard Blumenthal said: “This milestone achievement is a credit to the dedication of Metro-North employees and its partners to safely serve rail commuters in Connecticut. This life-saving technology will make rail travel in our state safer for the traveling public. I look forward to Connecticut DOT and Metro-North completing critical updates on the Waterbury Line to achieve full operation throughout the system.”

Rep. Nita Lowey said: “This is an important moment for the safety of Lower Hudson Valley residents. I have been pushing for full implementation of Positive Train Control since 2008, and am so glad this important milestone has been achieved. The completion of PTC will reduce collisions and derailments, and is a critical step to improve the transportation safety of our region.”

Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney said: “The tragic Metro-North derailment in Spuyten Duyvil was a dark day for folks here in the Hudson Valley. Since that day, I’ve fought for years to help our commuter rail systems access funds to implement Positive Train Control, life-saving technology that will prevent accidents and keep commuters safe. I’m heartened by the news that this end-of-year deadline will be met by Metro-North, Amtrak and all freight and commuter railways across the country, and thank the MTA and MTA leadership for their dedication on this important project. This is a big win for commuters and communities across the Hudson Valley and the culmination of years of hard work.”

CTDOT Commissioner Joseph Giulietti said: “With this PTC technology we are reinforcing our commitment to safety, for both our passengers and the men and women who work on the railroad, for years to come. This monumental project would have not been possible without the tremendous partnership and coordination between the MTA, Metro-North, Amtrak, the FRA and the dedicated team at the CTDOT—thank you for your resolve to see this project through despite the many obstacles we faced this year.”

Lisa Daglian, Executive Director of the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA (PCAC) said: “We could all use some good news this year and installation and implementation of Positive Train Control certainly qualifies. Thanks to the dedicated workers who made this happen – and the collaboration across many agencies and jurisdictions – riders can feel safer and even more confident as they travel by train in 2021.”

Gerard Bringmann, Chairman of the Long Island Rail Road Commuter Council said: “When we get on the train we want to know that we’re going to arrive at our destination without harm. Positive Train Control is a critical addition to the Long Island Rail Road’s toolbox to keep riders and workers safe

by preventing collisions and derailments and we thank everyone at the LIRR, the MTA, Amtrak and others who worked hard to ensure PTC installation was completed on time.”

Elliot G. (Lee) Sander, President, Americas Region, Bombardier Transportation said: “We are proud of our partnership with the MTA and Bombardier’s role with Siemens Mobility in successfully implementing this new, innovative, federally-mandated safety technology at two of the largest and most complex commuter railroads in the country. We’re committed to providing the MTA railroads and all of our customers with technologies that result in safe, reliable and efficient transportation for their passengers.”

Marc Buncher, CEO of Siemens Mobility in North America said: “This milestone is a true testament of collaboration – Metro North, Long Island Rail Road, Bombardier and Siemens Mobility worked together in order to achieve certification prior to the deadline. This intelligent infrastructure will benefit New York metropolitan passengers and should be seen as a highlight for the MTA in 2020.”

PTC maintenance will continue, following completion on both railroads, to monitor reliability and safety as well as system software updates to make operational improvements and correct variances.

More information about how Positive Train Control works on the MTA network can be found in this video: [youtube.com/watch?v=bIX9wWIY_wg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bIX9wWIY_wg)