

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

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**House Passes Schiff, Waxman, Gallegly Provisions Requiring Stricter Standards on Collision Avoidance Systems Implementation on Major U.S. Rail Lines**

*Bill passes quickly in wake of deadly Metrolink-Union Pacific crash in Chatsworth*

Washington, DC – Congress acted quickly on measures introduced by Representatives Adam Schiff, Henry A. Waxman and Elton Gallegly to require all major U.S. railroads to install “positive train control” systems designed to help avoid collisions. The passage of these provisions came in response to the recent Metrolink-Union Pacific crash in Chatsworth. Similar legislation was passed earlier this year, but it did not contain strict enough penalties. That bill (H. Res. 1492) was brought to the floor again today in its final form with many of the provisions introduced by Reps. Schiff, Waxman and Gallegly added to the bill. The bill will now be sent to the Senate for final approval and then on to the President to be signed into law.

“The bill passed today should ensure that proper safeguards are going to be put in place,” said Schiff. “They are tragically overdue and must be enacted without delay.”

“Safety must be the highest priority on the rails,” said Waxman. “This legislation is an important first step and we must remain vigilant about its enforcement and implementation to prevent future accidents.”

“There is no doubt these provisions are necessary, which is why we acted so quickly, although the final compromise bill should have forced the railroads to comply sooner,” Gallegly said. “But, this is the first word, not the last. Once the National Transportation Safety Board completes its investigation, my colleagues and I will take another look and see if more legislation is necessary.”

In January 2005, a Metrolink train in Glendale in Rep. Schiff’s district collided with an automobile that was abandoned on the tracks. That collision killed 11 people and was the deadliest Metrolink crash in its history, until the tragic collision in Chatsworth. Rep. Waxman’s district includes Chatsworth, the site of the collision that took 25 lives and injured 135 people, 40 of them critically. Twenty-one of those who died in the Chatsworth accident had lived in Rep. Gallegly’s district. Rail safety experts say a positive train control system could have prevented the collision of a Metrolink commuter train with a Union Pacific freight train.

The provisions introduced in the House by Reps. Schiff, Waxman, and Gallegly were first introduced in the Senate by Senators Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer.

The provisions included in the bill drafted by Reps. Schiff, Waxman, and Gallegly will:

- Require both commuter and passenger railroads and freight train that share a track to implement positive train control systems;
- Requires installation of these systems on all other passenger rail lines and rail lines used to transport hazardous materials; and
- Authorize the Secretary of Transportation to assess fines up to \$100,000 on rail carriers that fail to comply.

In the wake of the Chatsworth train collision, the bill also mandates a safety analysis on using cell phones and other devices in the cab of the train and reforms the hours of service rule to ensure that train conductors and other personnel receive adequate rest on the job.

Background:

The National Transportation Safety Board has called for installation of positive train control systems to avert collisions, particularly on high-risk track shared by freight and passenger trains.

Here is how positive train control systems work:

- Digital communications are combined with Global Positioning System (GPS) technology to monitor train locations and speeds.
- These systems can detect excessive speed, improperly aligned switches, whether trains are on the wrong track, unauthorized train movements, and whether trains have missed signals to slow or stop.
- If engineers do not comply with signals, the system automatically brings the trains to a stop.

Positive train control systems have been put to use only in limited areas, including the Northeast and between Chicago and Detroit. California has no positive control systems although Southern California has the most track shared by freight and passenger trains in the United States.