

FILE COPY

April 3, 1968

Honorable A. Scheffer Lang  
Administrator  
Federal Railroad Administration  
Department of Transportation  
Washington, D. C. 20591

Dear Mr. Lang:

The National Transportation Safety Board's review of data covering the last several years for train accidents shows progressively worsening trends in rates, occurrences, deaths, and damage. Furthermore, and especially disturbing, many train accidents in recent years have involved hazardous or poisonous materials, resulting in fires, or the escape of poisonous or hazardous materials followed by evacuation of populated areas. The latter collateral factors, coupled with a rising accident rate, increase the probability of catastrophic occurrences.

Total train accidents<sup>1/</sup> increased from 4,149 in 1961 to 6,793 in 1966, up 63.7%, and according to preliminary figures increased to 7,089 in 1967, up 71% over 1961. Train accidents per million train-miles increased from 7.09 in 1961 to 11.29 in 1966, up 59.2%. Deaths in train accidents increased from 158 to 214, or by 35.4%. Reported loss and damage to lading in train accidents (which excludes rough handling) increased from \$9.3 million to \$18.6 million during the 1961-1966 period, or up 100%; such loss and damage was up from \$15,800 to \$30,900 per million train -miles, or up 95.6%. Track and equipment damage reported in train accidents increased from \$50.4 million to \$99.0 million, up almost 100%; such track and equipment damage was up from \$86,200 to \$164,500 per million train-miles, or up 90.9%.

---

<sup>1/</sup> Excludes train-service and non-train accidents.