

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3203

September 18, 2023

The Honorable Amit Bose  
Administrator  
Federal Railroad Administration  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE  
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Administrator Bose:


We write to bring your attention to several railroad safety concerns in the City of Binghamton, New York, and urge the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) to promptly inspect the structural integrity of the railroad bridges in the city. A recent visual inspection commissioned by the city of all railroad bridges located within Binghamton found an alarming number of the bridges to be in troubling condition, including potential structural or safety concerns. The City firmly believes there are clear discrepancies between Norfolk Southern's findings of the bridges and the audit the City contracted. Norfolk Southern has a responsibility to comprehensively respond to the concerns of the City and the community. To address this, we ask that the FRA meet with the city to discuss these findings and also conduct a separate, federal audit and inspection of the bridges in question to understand whether or not these visual concerns pose greater safety threats. Additionally, we ask that you meet with the City to discuss their report and hear their concerns.

Earlier this year, the City of Binghamton hired an independent engineering firm to survey the twenty-five bridges — owned by either Norfolk Southern Corporation (Norfolk Southern) or the New York Susquehanna & Western Corporation — found within the city. The independent inspections, which began in June 2023, were visual safety inspections focused on identifying any signs of distress “that may indicate serious safety and/or structural concerns”. The visual inspections found twelve bridges owned and operated by Norfolk Southern Railroad to be in severe or poor condition indicating either a structural or safety concern that requires further investigation subsequent action by Norfolk Southern.<sup>[1]</sup> To further establish the rail infrastructure issues to be addressed in this community, and to set forth the outlines of a plan to address it, it is critical that FRA begin and maintain regular communication with the City of Binghamton, and that FRA conduct its own audit and inspection of the bridges found to have a structural or safety concern.

It is alarming to hear that the City's independent engineering firm found twelve bridges with structural concerns and we ask that you give this matter full attention to maintain safety for the local community surrounding the bridges.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. Should you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact our offices.

Sincerely,

  
Charles E. Schumer  
United States Senator

  
Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator

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<sup>[1]</sup> [chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.binghamton-ny.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/9704](https://www.binghamton-ny.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/9704)