

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 21, 2021

Mr. Paul J. Wiedefeld
General Manager and CEO
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
600 5th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20001

Dear Mr. Wiedefeld:

We regret that we must write to you about another safety issue with Metrorail. Last week's derailment of WMATA Train 407, a Kawasaki-made 7000 series railcar, near Arlington Cemetery thankfully ended without fatalities or serious injuries. However, the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) has indicated that the nature of the derailment and the equipment failure that made it possible could have led to a much worse outcome. It is imperative that WMATA cooperate fully with the NTSB and the Washington Metrorail Safety Commission (WMSC) to ascertain all factors that led to this derailment and to implement a lasting solution to the Kawasaki 7000 series rail cars' susceptibility to failure and to prevent future derailments. WMATA's transparency with the public throughout this process is critical.

We appreciate your early indications that you will cooperate with the NTSB investigation. Our expectation is that this will include thorough and timely responses to questions about the history of WMATA's awareness of safety concerns with the 7000 series rail cars. We are deeply troubled by the possibility that WMATA knew about this safety concern as early as 2017, but failed to implement a course of action sufficient to prevent last week's derailment.

Residents of the National Capital Region deserve a safe, reliable, and well-functioning transit system. While your cooperation and information sharing with the NTSB and WMSC require your urgent attention, please know that we will be eager to hear from you in a timely manner on your plans to address the specific safety concerns associated with last week's derailment, to restore public confidence in your organization, and to embed safety more effectively into your organizational culture—a repeated focus of our discussions with you since you took the helm of WMATA six years ago.

In addition, the abrupt reduction in service has been difficult for riders. We appreciate the briefings that have been provided or scheduled thus far. Please continue to provide us and the public with details on the actions WMATA is taking to assist riders, including steps to expand bus service, provide accurate train schedules and real-time arrival information, and protect public health in stations and on trains and buses while the rail system operates with a reduced fleet.

We look forward to more complete information on WMATA's plans to address these serious concerns. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

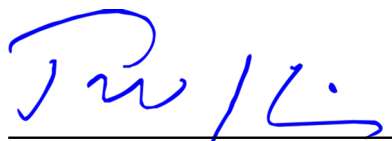
Sincerely,



Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



Mark R. Warner
United States Senator



Tim Kaine
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator