

Joseph D. Morelle  
25<sup>th</sup> District, New York

Committee on Rules  
Committee on Budget  
Committee on Education and Labor



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Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020

The Honorable Elaine Chao  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Ave. SE  
Washington, D.C., 20590

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

Dear Secretary Chao and Mr. Batory,

I write to you today to express my extreme disapproval regarding the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) rules change to hazardous materials regulations allowing for the bulk transport of Methane, commonly known as liquefied natural gas (LNG), in rail tank cars. This dangerous gas would pass directly through my district in Upstate New York's Monroe County, and pose a threat to the citizens living there as well as their environment and our first responders.

Natural gas in its liquid state can become dangerous if spilled and evaporated. It can cause a threat to the environment, along with the people that inhale it. That is why the National Transportation Safety Board and the National Association of the State Fire Marshall strongly oppose the rules change that allows 100 tankers of natural gas to be transported by train. Despite the regulation around the rule requiring liquefied natural gas to be carried in tankers specifically-designed tankers, the severe threat posed by an accident remains too great.

In July of 2013, a train carrying crude oil derailed from the tracks in Lac-Megantic, Quebec. This incident killed 47 people and created long lasting effects on the community. Additionally, 36 of the 39 remaining downtown buildings had to be demolished due to petroleum contamination of the townsite according to Radio-Canada.

Alongside the health risks that an increase in natural gas could cause, a possible accident would put our valuable first responders at risk. While the Rochester Fire Department attests that they can handle any disasters that come their way, they should not be subjected to dealing with these harmful gases when there can be more safety measures and more sustainable materials used. Our first responders are vital to our community especially in these times, and a spill of natural gas will consume great sums of their physical and technical resources.

Overall, the dangers that this new rule creates do not outweigh the benefits that it has the potential to bring, and I urge the Department of Transportation and Trump Administration to reverse their decision.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Joseph D. Morelle".

Joseph D. Morelle  
Member of Congress