



THOMAS J VILSACK
GOVERNOR

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Sally J Pederson
Lt GOVERNOR

October 5, 2001

Marion C. Blakey
Chairman
National Transportation Safety Board
490 L'Enfang Plaza SW
Washington, D.C. 20594

Dear Chairman Blakey:

I write on behalf of the people of the state of Iowa to respectfully request that the National Transportation Safety Board conduct a public hearing concerning the circumstances surrounding the derailment of the Amtrak California Zephyr near Nodaway, Iowa on March 17, 2001. In light of the recent events of September 11, 2001, I think it is extremely important that the people of Iowa and the people of the country who are turning to the railroad as an alternative form of transportation can do so with confidence. With dramatically increased ridership, which could occur as the result of the events of September 11, 2001, the potential for a catastrophic event has dramatically increased.

Based upon information that has been provided to me, it appears that the derailment on March 17, 2001 was the result of a metallurgical defect from a manufacturing process. It's been indicated to me that there may possibly be other locations or other rails forged from this defective process, which might cause additional trauma. May I respectfully request that at the hearing sworn testimony be taken from the raw material manufacturer, the forger and track owner as to what procedures were put in place to inspect and test for metallurgical defects, and how in the future defective track can be identified before dangerous derailments occur. I know that the National Transportation Safety Board is charged with the responsibility of investigating and determining the cause of derailments and making recommendations, and I believe a public hearing would be very helpful in the Board's carrying out its responsibilities. Thank you for taking my request into consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Vilsack".

Thomas J. Vilsack
Governor

TJV/kk
cc: Charlie B. Romstad

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