

Jesse Francis Pariso

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Jan 13, 2000

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OFFICE OF THE
GENERAL COUNSEL
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Ms. Jolene Molitoris
Federal Railroad Administrator
Wash. D.C.

Dear Ms. Molitoris:

In response to your recent ruling encouraging train whistles, you may be interested in the attached letter. The response was to place the noise issues to ~~the~~ your Federal Regulations.

It is hard for me to believe your answer to this national noise pollution is to add to the noise by continuing an ineffective system. I ask again, in our great new tech world of telecommunication, if a quiet, reliable warning system can not be devised.

More whistles and horns are an environmental disaster and not a way to the new millennium.

J.F. Pariso

Mr. Commissioner Rush Holt

August 14, 1998
404 Skillman Road
Skillman NJ 08558

Mr. David Levan
Conrail
2 Commerce Square
2101 Market Street
Philadelphia PA 19101

Dear Mr. Levan:

I wish to bring to your attention an increasingly troublesome ~~annoyance caused~~ by your Conrail engineers.

My wife and I live on property contiguous to your rail line between Hopewell and Belle Mead, NJ. For some time the increased night traffichas been accompanied by over-zealous whistle blowers for a gated CROSSING SOME 1/2-mile away - - not once but ten to fifteen toots. They also whistle for an overhead bridge nearby. In addition, they idle their engines for hours while ~~X~~ waiting for hooking up with 3M quarry cars parked on a nearby siding. Their idling noise has been compared to "stroking a chalkboard with fingernails" by residents more than a mile away.

In my instance, I have been afflicted for a year with Polymyalgia which ~~X~~ medical opinion suggests the cause is deep sleep deprivation and the cure is adequate deep sleep activity.

Surely, in this great age of technology, a superior and quieter signal system is possible to replace the warning system devised for open carriage vehicles of the past century.

I would be most grateful for your attention to the elimination of this nightly aggravation.

Sincerely yours,

Jesse F. Pariso
Phone 609-466-0947

Railroad Agency Wants, Towns To Allow Whistles at Crossings

WASHINGTON, Jan. 12 (AP) — Train whistles, nostalgic to some and a noisy nuisance to others, are being silenced at the expense of lives, federal regulators said today, and they want nearly 250 communities that have banned the whistles to let the warnings sound again if other steps are not taken to improve safety at those railroad crossings.

In 1998, 431 people died and more than 1,300 were injured in highway-rail crossing accidents, the Federal Railroad Administration said today in proposing a rule requiring train horns to be sounded at all public crossings.

When train horns are silenced at crossings with lights and gates, the collision rate jumps 62 percent, said Jolene Molitoris, administrator of the agency.

"It is really about life and death and how we can prevent truly preventable injuries and deaths," Ms. Molitoris said. "That's our goal."

Sounding train horns, two long blasts followed by one short one and one long, is standard practice at most of the 158,000 public railroad crossings in the United States. But 247 communities, with about 2,200 crossings, have prohibited trains from sounding their horns.

Under the proposal, horns could be silenced only if other steps to improve safety were taken in such "quiet zones." All crossings would have to have gates and lights. Additional steps that localities could take to get quiet zones approved under the proposal include installing cameras to catch motorists who try to cross

tracks when gates are down or lights are flashing or adding extra gates or lane dividers to keep motorists from zigzagging around gates.

Localities can apply for federal and state grants and loans to help pay for improvements needed to qualify as quiet zones, Ms. Molitoris said. The rule also proposes an upper volume limit for train horns.

Public hearings on the proposal are planned for spring in Ohio, Massachusetts, Florida, Oregon, California, the District of Columbia, Indiana and Illinois, where critics already are voicing opposition. Public comments will be accepted until May 26, and the railroad agency will act on the proposal next year.

Mayor Arlene Mulder of Arlington Heights, Ill., said noisy train whistles would affect the quality of life and property values. Developers are spending millions of dollars to build housing near commuter rail lines in the town, a suburb of Chicago.

"I understand safety, but whistle blowing in and of itself will not guarantee safety," Ms. Mulder said. "The real threat is to quality of life. We've been working so hard to rebuild and revitalize downtown, and now they say they're going to blow whistles?"

Leroy Jones, national legislative representative for the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, said urban sprawl, increased train traffic and Americans' hurry-up approach to life have heightened the problem.

Mr. Jones, a former engineer, said blowing train horns would reduce deaths and injuries from crossing collisions.

Protect Us From Noise

To the Editor:

I agree that the Clinton administration has environmental obligations this year (editorial, Jan. 10). One of these should be the refinancing of the Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Noise Abatement and Control. This office, closed in 1982, was established to meet the federal government's mandate to protect citizens from the harmful effects of noise. The administration has chosen to keep this office closed, thus denying Americans protection from noise. ARLINE L. BRONZAIT, Chairwoman, Noise Committee, N.Y.C. Council on the Environment, New York, Jan. 12, 2000



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