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Highway Bill Amendment Spotlights Rail Safety

Washington, D.C. — The Alliance for Innovation and Infrastructure (Aii) commends Representative Cummings for his effort to tackle rail safety by offering an amendment to the Drive Act requiring the FRA to study the benefits of rail safety technologies. This small amendment could easily be overlooked on a wide-ranging 500+ page highway bill, but its impact could be critical to upcoming rail safety efforts.

By focusing on how technology can be used to combat the number one cause of train derailments – track integrity – this amendment could lead to a much needed effort to modernize how the U.S. rail network is inspected and ultimately maintained. The Alliance recently released a report discussing how innovative rail safety technologies along with best practices for operators, inspectors, and engineers can significantly reduce the likelihood of derailments. This amendment would begin that important work.

As the Session winds down, critical legislative efforts, including those affecting rail safety, are being tacked on to must pass bills. The most recent highway bill extension passed in October provided a much needed Positive Train Control deadline extension. However, that extension also delayed the safety benefits PTC was intended to provide by next year, leaving a void that needs filling through other safety efforts.

Aii commends Representative Cummings for pursuing one of those safety efforts, and encourages all Members of the House of Representatives to vote in favor of his amendment.

The Alliance for Innovation and Infrastructure (Aii) is a U.S.-based nonprofit committed to recognizing the nation's need for improved infrastructure and highlighting innovative and effective strategies to address these issues related to energy, transportation, and technology advancements.

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