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<u>For Immediate Release</u>
January 3, 2019

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Commuter Rail Successfully Meets 2018 PTC Congressional Milestones
December 2020 is the Deadline for Full PTC Implementation

All commuter rail systems have successfully met the Congressional deadline for 2018 Positive Train Control (PTC) installation milestones, according to an American Public Transportation Association (APTA) analysis. In addition, all commuter railroads are 100 percent committed to completely implementing PTC before or by December 2020.

Under current law (49 U.S.C. 20157), commuter railroads were required to meet the following milestones by December 31, 2018. As defined in 49 U.S.C. 20157(a)(3)(B), they are to have:
- Installed all PTC hardware (wayside and onboard equipment);
- Acquired all necessary spectrum for PTC implementation;
- Completed all employee training;
- Initiated testing on at least one territory subject to the PTC requirement (or other criteria); and
- Submitted a revised plan and alternative schedule to the Secretary of Transportation for implementing a PTC system.

PTC is a complex signaling and communications technology that will provide critical safety redundancies to an already safe commuter rail industry. In fact, rail is already among the safest travel modes, and commuter rail and intercity rail are 18 times safer than traveling by automobile.

"Installing and implementing PTC is an unparalleled technical challenge in scale, complexity and time required," said APTA President and CEO Paul P. Skoutelas. "The commuter railroad industry has made extraordinary efforts to meet the 2018 deadline and will continue their focus and hard work to complete full implementation before or by December 2020."

In the next two years, one of the biggest challenges is interoperability. Commuter rail systems will need to ensure that their PTC implementation is seamlessly operational for both host and tenant operators. This will require thorough communication and coordination between the various host and tenant railroads.

PTC implementation technological challenges have included: a limited number of PTC-qualified vendors simultaneously in demand by both the passenger and freight railroad industries to develop, design, and test this complex safety technology; diagnosing and resolving software issues; securing adequate access to track and locomotives for installation and testing; and achieving interoperability, as commuter rail systems operate in mixed traffic with other freight and passenger railroads.

Full implementation of PTC for publicly funded commuter railroads is estimated to cost more than $4 billion. Additionally, this figure does not account for up to $130 million in annual future operating and

maintenance costs. The more than $4 billion cost of PTC comes on top of the existing $90 billion backlog needed to bring the national public transportation industry into a state of good repair.

For more information on PTC, go to apta.com/ptc

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